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*Upon their Writings, Inventions, Discoveries, and Public Conduct.*

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**Gray versus Malthus.**

THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
POPULATION AND PRODUCTION



INVESTIGATED ;

AND

**The Questions,**

*Does Population regulate Subsistence, or Subsistence  
Population ;*

*Has the latter, in its Increase, a Tendency to augment or  
diminish the average Quantum of Employment  
and Wealth ;*

AND

*Should Government encourage or check early Marriage ;*

DISCUSSED :

BY GEORGE PURVES, L.L.D.

Simon Green

"We are aware of the importance of a full discussion of the principles of population and production in the present conflicting state of the public opinion on that great practical question."

*No. 31, Quarterly Review, October 1818, p. 56.*

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**K. H. Rau.**

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## TO M. SAY.

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SIR,

I do myself the honour of inscribing to you the following discussion concerning the principles of population and production. My object, in this, is the same, as in my former. It is to endeavour to clear the science of statistics from mere theoretical fancies in these vital points, and to establish their principles on real causes and actual results.

I am not informed, whether the statisticians of the continent have gone much into the examination of a doctrine certainly among the most appalling, broached in ancient or modern times. Sir James Steuart seems to have laid the basis of the subsistence theory, but Mr. Malthus gave it its present form. The bold assumptions of the latter made an extraordinary impression on the public mind here. For many years our political writers of every class would frequently go out of their way to show that they were antipopulationists. The most ridiculous effects were attributed to the new subsistence principle. In their theoretic fury, they seemed to consider all the evils of human nature as springing from the increase of population.

I suspect indeed, that this was less the effect of real belief derived from strict examination, than of fashion.

For with us, as well as with you, fashion often enters into science, and has more influence than either facts or reason. I certainly have never met with any subsistencian, who seemed to be even aware, that the doctrines which he held, should be tried by the great law of nature, the regulating power of the demand; and that they not merely abrogated, but actually reversed that law. But be the cause what it may, the subsistence or antipopulation theory seemed to have triumphed completely in Britain for several years. Certain attempts had indeed been made at first to check this popular delusion; but all gave way.

At length, in the spring of 1815, the author of the *Happiness of States* (a work which he meant to have published in 1804, but was prevented) stood forth to vindicate what he conceived to be the arrangements of nature, by an appeal to real causes and actual facts. This determined populationist, unawed by the epidemical fury around him, and confident of having facts and every principle of circulation, as he affirms, on his side, treated mere bold assertions as of no value, and coolly told our subsistencians, that, with respect to their theory, "to examine was to refute." From a minute analysis of causes and effects, connected with population and subsistence, he drew conclusions, in every leading point, exactly contrary to those which Mr. Malthus grounded upon general assumptions.

The populationists are now evidently gaining ground. Mr. Graham; Mr. Weyland, and several others, have since attacked the subsistence theory each in his own way. But the public mind here is certainly still much in doubt on this most important practical question.

It is my intention to bring the two theories fully

into contact with each other on all the points of difference, in order to enable my readers to decide for themselves.

Our feelings, Sir, ought not to influence us in our decision; but what a very eminent and excellent public character wrote to the author of the population theory, just as he was going to enter on an examination of the subject, will *a priori* be assented to by all. "If you have succeeded in establishing your position, *that population is the regulator of subsistence, not subsistence of population*, you will, I am sure, afford great relief to every benevolent mind." The consequences of the doctrines of the subsistence theory are such, that no friend to our race, even among those who have admitted them, but would be glad to find them proved to be unwarranted.

The question, Sir, is no abstract one; no merely theoretical one. It affects practically, vitally, essentially, intimately the fortunes of every man, woman and child of the human race. The populationists are contending for the liberty of mankind against a tyranny of the most repulsive and insufferable character. Their object is to assert the rights and power of mind, and to rescue rational beings from a slavery as miserable as it is degrading: and, what would give a peculiarly envenomed sting to all, a slavery, which, were it really imposed by nature, must be hopeless.

The whole question, Sir, hinges on this, *whether there be any insuperable natural difficulties in the supplying of subsistence, which prevent the full operation of the law of the demand with respect to its supply*: and these must evidently be found either in a *natural deficiency of materials, or of suppliers*. Should, therefore, the statisticians of the continent take up the

discussion of the very important and deeply interesting question at issue, I trust, they will at least not commit the blunder which has been so generally committed on this side of the water. I trust, they will not try it without a reference to what alone can decide it correctly: to that great law of nature, the regulating power of the Demand.

THE AUTHOR.

*London,*  
*1st May, 1818.*

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### ERRATA.

- Page 52, line 1 from the bottom, for *ratio* read *ratios*.  
98, line 5 from the bottom, dele *formerly*.  
110, line 8 from the top, dele *that*.  
144, last line, for *want* read *wants*.  
178, line 6 from the bottom, for *them* read *it*.  
184, line 5 from the top, for *mases* read *masses*.  
203, line 2 from the bottom, for *af* read *or*.  
278, line 2 from ditto, for *mountain straths*, read *mountaine, straths*.  
331, last line, for *worse* read *worst*.  
401, line 6 from the top, after *user* add a comma.  
405, line 18 from the top, for *cotton* read *cottons*.  
419, line 3 from the top, for *attentions* read *attention*.

THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
POPULATION,  
&c.

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BOOK 1.  
THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE DISCUSSION.

**I**F we except the grand fundamental question in statistics, *What is the source of productiveness in point of wealth?* there is not another in the science which involves so many important practical consequences as that which is meant for the subject of this essay, *Has population a tendency to over-increase?*

It has long, perhaps always, been a prevailing notion with the multitude, that circulators are too numerous, and that were these diminished in number, by sending them off as colonists for example, it would be better for

the remainder. From this naturally springs another popular notion, that an increase of circulators tends to render the circumstances of the former worse, as these new-comers obtain a greater or less share of the advantages of the former residents.

These notions appear so plausible, and to be so fairly derived from facts on a first or partial view of the subject, it is not much to be wondered at, that even the great body of the better-informed classes have admitted them, or, at least, not positively rejected them. The professed statistician himself has generally been rather disposed to take them for granted; and though, in more enlightened times, opinions evidently derived from actual facts and utterly inconsistent with these, have met with assent from many, there appears, on the whole, to have been either a general acquiescence in those notions, or a leaning towards them both among the learned and unlearned, among statesmen and the people.

At length these notions have been embodied in a theory; and the maintainers of this theory seem to consider them rather as axioms, than as mere opinions. For some years it was very generally admitted among the statisticians of Great Britain, that, on the arrangements of nature, circulators were apt to become more numerous than was advantageous; or, in other

words, *that population has a tendency to over-increase.*

Upon a general view of the subject, however, this certainly does not seem to be consistent either with the laws of nature's arrangements, or with the results of these, when viewed impartially and in all their extent. And it is affirmed on the other side, that though, from a partial view of the facts, it is true the inquiring statistician himself, who rises above the influence of name and of popular prejudices, and will have a reason for every thing, may at first see something real in this theoretical conclusion, yet when he examines these more thoroughly, he begins to suspect this first view to be fallacious. The more he analyses them, he perceives the contrary opinion to be more probable, until at length a complete analysis of them proves the first notion to be utterly unwarranted, and the other to be strictly founded on them.

Sir James Stewart, and several other statisticians of name, have sported more or less of the theory of an injurious tendency in population to over-increase, but Mr. Malthus has the credit of embodying it more completely, and distinctly introducing it to the notice of the public. To his ideas, therefore, I shall pay particular attention in discussing the question.



This theory has been rather disputed in some points, than entirely rejected by its opponents, except by Mr. Gray. It is the leading object of this author, in the *Happiness of States*, to establish the doctrine, that *the increase of population is so far from having any tendency to overstock, that the more rapid and extensive it is, it necessarily supplies human wants more completely, augments more largely the average amount of employment, income and wealth, renders civilization more complete, and thus, of course, tends more effectually to promote the happiness of all.*

In this essay, the object of which is to ascertain what are the real principles of population in regard to the means afforded for a supply of its wants, or as to its tendency to increase or over-increase, I mean to confine myself chiefly to examining these opposite theories minutely on the fundamental point at issue. Collateral, or connected topics may be noticed, but principally with a reference to the grand point. By keeping the attention concentrated upon this, we shall get a more clear and distinct view of it, and be better able to come to a correct and decisive conclusion upon it. The fundamental positions may be sound and part of the superstructure unsound. On the other hand, the fundamental doctrines may be merely fanciful, and yet much of the detail

used in illustrating them may be real. We must pay particular attention to discriminating here.

I have to observe, that there seems a strong bias in speculative minds towards what I call *subtilizing*, and to fancying causes out of the common line. This affectation of subtilty and singularity, with a fondness for occult causes, infects most theorists, whatever be the science in which they speculate. But in none is this more strikingly displayed (particularly since the time of those French visionaries, the Economists) than in statistics, though a science of familiar every-day facts and causes. Indeed, in order to reach truth, the inquiring statistician has little more to do than to clear away the mass of imaginations and affected subtleties, in which the subject lies buried, and to look at nature as she is found in real life. This task, however, is now become a herculean one. Scarcely in theology itself during the monkish ages, have we had such a cloud of gross absurdities, unintelligible dogmas, and unwarranted imaginations exhibited to the sober inquirer, as, during the present enlightened and inquiring age, in this science of actual facts.

## CHAPTER II.

THE LEADING IDEAS OF THE TWO THEORIES  
STATED.

It will assist in bringing the question at issue more fully and fairly before us, and enable the reader to judge more correctly for himself upon it, to give the leading ideas of each theory. This will also be useful in point of brevity.

The mode adopted by Mr. Malthus in treating of population, is extremely defective. If we allow him to assume and take for granted every thing which appears to support the notion of a natural tendency in population to over-increase or overstock, it may have its merits. But, in a general inquiry concerning the real causes and actual results connected with population and subsistence, it is calculated to bewilder both himself and his readers, and to render the subject, as actually found in nature, unintelligible. He commences with assuming a constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it, and that population naturally increases at a certain rate, provided there be subsistence sufficient. He then states gene-

rally what he considers the checks to population; and he proceeds to detail the operation of these checks among nations both in ancient and modern times. This is evidently an ex-parte view of the subject, were it even satisfactory as far as it goes; and it is by no means calculated to set it before us distinctly in all its causes and results, without reference to any theory.

Mr. Gray's view in his Inquiry is more general and complete. His chief object is, he informs us, to analyse the effects of the increase of population, in all their extent, which he tells us is not yet entirely completed\*. He is even more particular than Mr. Malthus with respect to that portion of the subject, to which this author confines himself, the tendency to overstock. He separates the consideration of employment and wealth from that of subsistence. In treating of circulation, or the materials of circulation, he analyses the causes of the influence which he attributes to the increase of population, or an uniform tendency to augment employment and income. In the fourth book he proceeds to treat expressly of population, without any reference either to a tendency or non-tendency in it to over-increase. He considers the grand source of the increase

\* See his second Letter to M. Say, All Classes productive, p. 297.

of population to be early marriage. He then details the stimulative populating causes, or those which tend to make that source more prolific, and next the counteracting. The latter he divides into the defecundating, or those which render marriage less productive, and the positively depopulating, or those which produce mortality. He proceeds to discuss the important questions, whether population has always been increasing, and whether it will always continue to increase, and closes this branch by comparing the progress of population with time. He now analyses subsistence, and attempts to ascertain what quantity of subsistence land, on an average, is capable of being made to produce, and then the amount of population, which land, cultivated to its full average extent, is capable of subsisting. He next proceeds to inquire into the influence of population and subsistence on each other. The result of all he finds to be, that population regulates subsistence; and that with respect to the latter, as well as with respect to employment, income and wealth, population, far from having a tendency to over-increase or over-stock, has an uniform effect directly contrary.

This mode of inquiring is certainly better calculated to enable us to reach what is really true. Besides, the reader knows always his whereabouts; and, as he goes on, whether he

is satisfied or not, he is always distinctly presented with the why. Had Mr. Malthus adopted a plan somewhat similar, we should have been better able to obtain a clear view of the subject as seen by him, and of the reasons that he assigns for the regulating influence which he attributes to subsistence. As it is, he leaves us in doubt as to what that regulating influence consists in, or how it operates in producing the number which it can feed, and seldom more or fewer. I have several times read over his details of checks, and I confess, I really cannot say, that I comprehend what he considers this theoretic influence to be, or how it possesses so uniform and vast a power.

Mr. Gray, in his Inquiry, separates the influence of the increase of population with respect to subsistence, from that with respect to employment, income and wealth. Mr. Malthus mixes these together. The latter method tends to obscurity and confusion. In this discussion, therefore, I shall adopt the former, as conducing to a clearer as well as more correct view of the subject. For population may have a tendency to over-increase with respect to subsistence, and not with respect to employment, income and wealth, and vice versa.

The following seem to me to be the leading ideas of the two theories, and these I shall

distinctly consider. I give Mr. Gray's first, as he founds his views on an universal law necessarily arising out of the arrangements of nature, while Mr. Malthus forms his upon a deviation from that law in the case of subsistence alone. To discuss the operation of that law first will conduce both to brevity and to clearness.

## MR. GRAY'S LEADING IDEAS.

1. The principle of population as connected with subsistence, climate, government, &c. is, that, in all ordinary circumstances, population has a tendency to increase, but not to over-increase; for this increase carries in itself the power of fully supplying its various wants.

2. The natural progress of population, when compared with time, is according to no particular ratio, but depends upon the various circumstances in which it is placed. Compared with subsistence, in connected districts or countries, it uniformly renders the progress of the latter

## MR. MALTHUS'S LEADING IDEAS.

1. The principle of population, as so connected, is, that population has a natural tendency to over-increase, or to increase faster than subsistence.

2. The natural progress of population is according to the geometrical, and the natural progress of subsistence, only according to the arithmetical ratio.

nearly the same with its own.

3. The amount of population thus regulates the amount of subsistence as completely as it regulates clothing, housing and all other species of circulation depending on the will.

4. Superabundance, or an excess of subsistence, has a defecundating and depopulating effect.

5. The increase of population tends uniformly to increase the average amount of employment divided among the circulators, and, of course, to create an additional demand for hands.

6. The increase of population has, therefore, an uniform tendency to increase income and wealth; and not merely according to the old ratio, but according to a new and enlarged proportion, augmenting somewhat as the number of circulators increases.

3. The amount of subsistence regulates the amount of population.

4. Population increases more rapidly according to the abundance of subsistence.

5. Population, in its increase, has a tendency to overstock, or to produce more than a proper degree of fulness, and consequently to diminish the average quantity of employment among the existing members.

6. The increase of population has a certain natural tendency to promote poverty.



7. The diseases and evils generated by the increase of population, are chiefly those which spring from luxury, or an excess of subsistence, and from riches.

7. The diseases and evils generated by the increase of population, are chiefly those springing from a scarcity of food and from poverty.

In examining these ideas by the test of facts, I shall first consider the principle of population, next the regulating power attributed to population and to subsistence, then the tendency to increase or diminish employment, income and wealth, and lastly, the practical results.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION ACCORDING TO MR. GRAY.

*In all ordinary circumstances, Mr. Gray affirms, population, according to the arrangements of nature, has a tendency to increase, but not to over-increase; for this increase carries in itself the power of more effectually supplying its wants\*.*

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 6. p. 337. Ch. 5, et passim.

This seems thoroughly confirmed by the fact, that since the commencement of history, population, on the whole, has been upon the increase. Occasionally it is probable, so powerful has been the combination of unfavourable circumstances throughout the inhabited portion of the globe, that it may have been stationary and even retrogressive. But the gradual extension of cultivation, of civilization, of commerce and geographical knowledge, and the progress of intellectual attainments, and of inventions, as well as the information afforded by history, though this till very lately has been very scanty and uncertain \*, prove a gradual increase of population to have been the general result †. Indeed, I believe, it will not be disputed that, though there have been occasional stationary and retrogressive periods, the world has been gradually filling from the earliest portion of regular history. And in tracing back the occurrences of the human race, the entire failure of regular history at length seems fully to demonstrate, that previous to that period, the population of the world was extremely rude and ignorant, and consequently thin.

The rate of increase, however, by the ar-

\* A defect, by the way, which indirectly tends to confirm the same thing.

† For a more detailed proof of this result see the Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 6.

rangements of nature is utterly uncertain and changeable; for it depends, at all times, greatly, and sometimes entirely, on the circumstances in which the population is placed. There is, therefore, no fixed or natural ratio of increase with respect to time. "The progress of population," says Mr. Gray, "is both irregular and uncertain, and no fixed ratio can be obtained concerning it, for there is none. It is entirely regulated by circumstances. And, therefore, we may be egregiously out in arguing from what has been with respect to it, to what may be, and much more from what has been the fact in very favourable periods to what may be in all circumstances that may probably take place hereafter. One thing only is certain, that *the natural progress of population is found in no particular ratio; but is its progress regulated by its various circumstances in any given district.* It must, therefore, be ever varying with those circumstances\*."

When we turn to the first ages of men, and consider the small number of inhabitants on the globe, we are naturally disposed to inquire, why did they not increase much faster than they appear to have done? Indeed this question will arise even at present, when many districts of the world are peopled so consider-

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 375. See also ch. 7 of this Book.

ably. There is an abundance of room in every direction for man to extend his numbers, and there are ample means of obtaining subsistence to any amount that is required. It, however, more forcibly occurs on contemplating the early periods of the existence of men. We find an immense place fitted for human beings, with only a few wanderers here and there upon its surface. The plan of building so vast a mansion and storehouse capable of containing and feeding such unnumbered millions, and supplying only a small number of inhabitants at first, which was to increase till the whole was either fully peopled, or nearly so, we are to assume was most suited to the other arrangements of nature, and best upon the whole for a succession of transitory beings. And there are unquestionably advantages arising from it.

The statistician, in taking this general view of the subject, will almost instinctively be set upon inquiring, why, after a period of at least four thousand years, there is no country peopled to its full extent, while most regions are so thinly peopled, and immense tracts are scarcely peopled at all? He will scarcely *a priori* attribute this tardiness to a want of subsistence; for he sees every where the most ample means of fresh supplies, whenever the cultivator chooses to turn his attention to new lands, or to cultivating more effectually the

old. He will be rather disposed to attribute it to something in the nature of population itself. And it is not unlikely but he will fall into a similar train of thinking with that of the author of the *Happiness of States* in his free inquiry for himself on this subject, with as little regard as possible either for name, or for the ideas already broached upon it, except what facts and reasoning from them warrant.

That writer, in analysing the arrangements of nature with respect to the increase of population, finds the grand source of this increase in early marriage. "But it is not merely marrying, that will keep up, or increase, population. It must be a general or national practice of early marrying or marrying near twenty. Late marriage is seldom productive. Two children are perhaps the full average of all marriages when the male and female are beyond thirty. If the female be younger, the average will be more. The children of late marriages are also more puny. They are not only less likely to reach the marriageable age, but to be productive in their turn should they reach it. Early marriages, on the other hand, are, with the exception of a deficiency of health, or of premature death in either or both the parties, almost uniformly productive. Perhaps the average production of marriages before or at twenty, is fully five, if not six. These

children are also stronger, and more likely to be productive\*."

He proceeds: "It is the average number of children to a marriage that regulates the increase of population. Under a national habit of late marriage, that is, after twenty-seven on the part of the woman, even supposing only the average mortality, the national population will decrease: while, under a national practice of early marriage, that is, before or not much beyond twenty, particularly on the part of the female, it will increase, and pretty rapidly, in countries not very populous, unless counteracted by some uncommon depopulating circumstances. I am disposed to think, that if the average period of life at which females marry in a country were to reach twenty-five, population would be stationary, if it did not grow retrogressive."

It may be observed here, that there must be a restriction as to earliness. Premature cohabitation tends to defecundate. And this effect would probably take place before seventeen, in temperate climates; but in hot, if we are to credit the information of travellers, a still earlier age would be fully prolific.

That early marriage is the grand source of the increase of population will, it is likely,

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 1. p. 298.

be admitted without a dissenting voice. "Whatever then," says Mr. Gray, "contributes to keep up a general spirit of early marrying in a nation, or to give an additional spur to it, and, farther, whatever tends to preserve or increase general health, is a cause that operates towards augmenting population \*."

"The general causes of marriage," he proceeds, "are the sexual desires, which become so impulsive at a certain age, the passion of love, so natural to the heart of man and woman, particularly when young, and convenience, or the advantages and comforts which marriage presents in point of housekeeping. The stimulating causes are various †." He then notices some of the chief stimulative populating causes or circumstances, as "warm genial seasons; a happy turn in the state of the national affairs, for example, a transition from war to peace; whatever tends to raise the income; or contributes to greater health; the introduction of improved medical systems; the influence of fashion," &c.

He next analyses the causes or circumstances which tend to retard the progress of population. These he divides into *defecundating*, or those which tend to render men and women less prolific, and *positively destroying*. The former "check the progress of population

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 2. p. 300.    † Ib.

by diminishing the number of births : the latter by destroying those that are born\*.” “ These counteracting causes are either of a physical or a moral kind, or a mixture of both. Some of them arise from the laws of human nature, and are utterly independent of the human will ; and others are partly produced by its choice. Some are regular, and some only occasional†.”

“ The grand defecundating causes are late marriage, excessive or immoral venery and luxury‡.” And he says, “ It may be affirmed generally, that labouring with the body has a fecundating virtue, and labouring with the mind, an influence of the opposite kind§.” He adds, “ It may be observed in general of all the regular causes which tend to destroy, that they tend also to defecundate ||.”

In analysing the positively destroying causes and circumstances, he notices first the physical. These are the principles of disease and death which nature has implanted in the human constitution (which are exhibited in the regular disorders of children, in fever, consumption); unhealthy climates; unhealthy seasons, and epidemical diseases produced by them; occasional famines; convulsions of na-

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 4. p. 311.

† Id. B. iv. ch. 3. p. 307.

‡ Ib. p. 309.

§ Ib.

|| Ib. p. 311.



ture, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and storms; and accidents, such as drowning, falling from heights, being run over by carriages, and a thousand others to which in common life men are exposed \*. He next analyses the moral causes of depopulation, or those wholly or at least chiefly dependent on the will. He then enumerates luxury or intemperance; war; political convulsions; crimes; and illicit sexual connexions and their consequences \*.

In this minute analysis of the real facts and causes connected with population, we have the subject brought fully and distinctly before us, as it exists in real life, without reference to any particular theory. The impartial statistician will perceive, that the stimulating causes, or circumstances which tend to promote the progress of population, and the counteracting causes, or circumstances which have a tendency to retard it, require equal attention. They are alike impressive; and a full consideration of both is necessary to understand the subject completely. There is so far from being any appearance of a natural tendency to over-increase, that when we consider the mortality among infants in spite of every care, the numberless varieties of disease to which all ages are subject, as well as accidents to which they are

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 4.

liable, which evidently increase as population becomes more crowded, we shall, on this general view, be rather apt to wonder how population increases at all. The stimulating causes will thus, of course, assume a peculiar importance.

If we view man in the savage or hunter's state, which has been supposed by many to be his original state, he seems not to be naturally a very prolific animal. "The savage population," says Mr. Gray, "with all its active and laborious employment out of doors, appears stationary, if it be not occasionally retrogressive. The causes of this must be sought for in the peculiar circumstances of these tribes: the want of constant regular employment, the sameness in their pursuits which makes them listless, their general idleness with starts of excessive rather than healthful labour, while their desolate and joyless condition produces an habitual gloom or depression of mind; their frequent fastings from necessity, and then, on a supply, their voracious eating, both which are debilitating; the misery and want to which they are so often reduced, and which render their state so unpropitious to love; the lateness of marriage on the part of the male, with the practice among many tribes of allowing prostitution before marriage; their intermarrying among themselves, without crossing the

breed, if the expression may be permitted; the length of time employed by the women in rearing their children, whom they nourish for three or four years, during which period they do not cohabit with their husbands; their frequent and exterminating wars; and perhaps not the least effective, their unhealthy woods and deserts: all these defecundating circumstances combine to render the savage tribes a sterile race\*."

And in all the barbarous periods of nations, they certainly seem to have populated very tardily.

In the mere pastoral state, man does not seem still to be very prolific, though his productiveness is increased. The wandering pastoral Tartars make very slow progress in increasing their numbers, no doubt from the influence of some of the counteracting causes which operate against population in the hunter's state. Indeed, if their number did increase much, the necessary results of an increase of population would force the great body of them to become stationary, and build villages and towns.

In the third, or agricultural state, "man becomes very productive. Indeed in this state, from the healthiness of his employment and his

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 3. p. 309.

temperance in living, he is found the most productive as well as long lived \*." In this state, the stimulating causes exist in their greatest strength, while the counteracting are proportionately weak.

Man is by no means so prolific in the fourth, or commercial state. "Manufactures and commerce introduce sedentary employments; and by means of the riches acquired from them, voluptuous habits and excessive eating, which are completely defecundating, as well as injurious to health, and tending to shorten life †." In this state, some of the populating causes are as strong as in the agricultural, particularly earliness of marriage; but, on the other hand, the counteracting causes or circumstances both of the defecundating and positively destroying kind gain an increasing force, and frequently to a degree which is extremely destructive.

But it is evident, that in all these states, whether found pure or mixed, though certain seemingly regular results prevail, the progress or retardation differs very materially according to circumstances. There is, therefore, no natural regular rate essentially connected with any of them. The only rate is that which is produced by the ever-varying circumstances,

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 3. p. 309.      † Id. ib.

in which any portion of it is found. *It is the force of the general and particular stimulating circumstances, corrected by that of the general and particular counteracting circumstances in which any division of population is placed, that regulates the rate of its increase* \*.

Mr. Gray, in his analysis, finds no particular influence in the mere quantity of subsistence. "I know not," says he, "that an abundance of subsistence is any additional cause of increasing population, unless the articles of necessary use be rendered cheaper by the abundance. In this case, single people of the lower ranks are disposed to marry earlier, because marriage is rendered more a matter of prudence. As to the influence of mere abundance in increasing the prolific powers of the great body on the whole, I am in doubt. A certain quantity of food is necessary to life and health, but this is much smaller than most people imagine. Beyond this quantity of subsistence, which is what a pampered townsman would call mere starvation, all additional food seems to add nothing either to health or to the prolific powers; but if the addition be considerable, it diminishes both †."

As to any universal regulating power in subsistence, he finds none: and there is none.

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 374.

† Id. B. iv. ch. 2. p. 306.

Reason is seen in all cases regulating the supply according to the demand ; and population carries in itself the means of enabling reason fully to accomplish its intention. But this will be more particularly considered in a subsequent part of the discussion.

An important question arises on a general view of the subject. If population be upon the whole, in all ordinary circumstances, making a progress, will it continue to do so till the earth reaches its full complement? Mr. Gray considers the negative as most probable. This will be brought more particularly under consideration afterwards. But whether the principle of increase may be completely overpowered by the growing influence of the defecundating and positively destroying circumstances, ere population has reached its complement, or whether that principle may carry it forward to that complement, till either of these results take place, Mr. Gray's principle of population, or that, *in all ordinary cases, it has a tendency to increase on the whole, but none to over-increase*, seems completely borne out by facts.

## CHAPTER IV.

IS THERE A TENDENCY IN ANIMAL LIFE, ACCORDING TO THE ARRANGEMENTS OF NATURE, TO INCREASE BEYOND THE NOURISHMENT PREPARED FOR IT?

**Mr. Malthus** maintains, that there is "a constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it\*:" and applying this to man, he affirms that "population has this constant tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence."

The former proposition may be true with respect to irrational animals, and yet be false with respect to the rational animal, man. I shall, therefore, consider the propositions separately.

This author has not stated the facts, from which he has deduced the opinion, that animal life has a tendency to increase faster than the nourishment prepared for it. He takes it at once for granted. The naturalist would object to the assumption of so important a principle in nature, though it related only to a mere matter of theoretical arrangement, or speculation, and he would insist upon having

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, B. i. ch. 1. p. 2.

the fact fully laid before him; but, when a doctrine is built upon it, which involves practical measures of the last importance to mankind, the statistician will instantly reject it, as far as the animal man is concerned, unless it is proved incontrovertibly by an ample detail of the clearest facts. He would not admit an opinion that leads to such consequences on the assertion of any man, for a moment.

It is, indeed, an assertion, when extended to animal life in general, which it would be difficult, if not impracticable, to prove satisfactorily by facts. And certainly the contrary opinion is much more agreeable to the known spirit and fitness of the arrangements of nature. In giving existence to animals she must have had in view to feed them; for without food they could not exist: and we know that she has actually supplied food of every various kind, required by the animals to whom she has given existence. The peculiar qualities and powers, with which she has endowed the different animals to obtain the specific food suited for them, have ever afforded matter of wonder and eulogium both to the naturalist and the theologian. Now, that she should have allowed them to exist, and have provided them with food adapted to them, and yet not have provided a sufficient quantity for them according to their natural rates of increase, under all their



circumstances, as well those connected with themselves as with others, seems *à priori* neither probable nor credible.

It is to be particularly attended to in this question, that animals themselves form a portion of food ; and that most animals of the sea, and many of the land genera, including man, live either wholly or in part on animals. The more rapidly then that animals increase, the more do they increase the quantity of nourishment.

If we were to calculate what would be the consequence of allowing any genus of animals to increase, were its own members not destroyed by others, perhaps the genus, upon that hypothetical supposition, might increase faster than the food intended for it; at least without the aid of man : for this reason, that nature provided food for them on a different arrangement. To this sort of suppositions, or imaginary hypotheses, the author of the theory which we are now discussing, seems very much addicted. If upon the present subject he entertains any such ideas, they cannot be allowed. We are to take facts as they are in nature. We are to consider animals as they are found in her arrangements, according to which she intended that they should obtain food themselves, and also at length afford food to others.

If we turn to the ocean, it is understood

that most of the animals which people its immense regions subsist on one another. The faster, therefore, they increase, the more food do they mutually supply. Whether they are actually on the increase, taken universally, I apprehend cannot be ascertained ; but, in spite of the increasing destruction committed upon them by man, they seem at least not to be decreasing, nor in any want of food.

If next we survey the land, we find no marks of any deficiency of subsistence. The tame animals on which man feeds, do not feed on animals. And far from there being any excess of these, or more than the food, supplied either by nature spontaneously, or the additional exertions of man, can maintain, it is a principal object with him to augment their number as fast as possible : and he finds plenty of subsistence for all that it suits him to rear. If certain animals which are not eaten and do not labour, increase faster than he wishes, for example, cats and dogs, they are killed not because these carnivorous animals could not find food, but because they yield him little or no profit. And it is to be considered, that were man not to interfere, the vast number of these prolific animals would supply abundance of food to wild animals, who are now either destroyed by him, or kept at a distance.

Even in the unpeopled regions of earth,

when animals are left chiefly to themselves, as in the immense wilds of Siberia, or those vast and not infertile districts extending for two or three thousand miles up the Missouri, on both sides, we do not find that the animals there reach the number which they are capable of maintaining. In the latter regions, which are visited only by a few Indians, the number of buffaloes, antelopes, beavers, bears, &c. seem far below the amount for which food is spontaneously supplied by nature.

The only proof, which Mr. Malthus produces for the notion of a tendency in animated or animal life, to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it, is an observation of Dr. Franklin. "It is observed by Dr. Franklin, that there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each other's means of subsistence. Were the face of the earth," he says, "vacant of other plants, it might be gradually sowed, and overspread with one kind only, as for instance with fennel: and were it empty of other inhabitants, it might in a few ages be replenished from one nation only, as for instance, with Englishmen \*."

"This," says Mr. Malthus, "is incontrovertibly true." I should say, incontrovertibly

\* Essay on Population, B. i. ch. 1. p. 3.

false. It is merely one of those clap-trap general observations, which men of genius have always been too apt to hazard, without duly considering whether they were founded on facts, or would stand the test of strict examination; but particularly since the time of Montesquieu, who gained so much fame by these bold and dashing observations. And if even philosophers will give their pens such license, they must submit, like other men, to have the truth told them in plain terms. As for the sapient remark about fennel, we shall leave it to the consideration and proof of those who choose to put it in practice; for it does not affect the present question at all. But the remark respecting Englishmen does, and must not be so slightly passed over. It implies what is evidently not true.

The world, which, according to Mr. Gray, is scarcely peopled yet to the one-eighth part of what it is capable of feeding\*, has required at least 4000 years to reach this scanty rate of population. Yet Dr. Franklin tells us, and Mr. Malthus agrees with him, that "were it empty of other inhabitants it might in a few ages be replenished from one nation only." This is theory against facts with a vengeance. If it be so easy a thing to people the world in a

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 7. p. 352.

few ages, why was it not peopled long ago? Its inhabitants had the most ample means of additional subsistence presented to them in all directions.

On the whole, the opinion that "there is a constant tendency in animals to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for them," appears to me to be unwarranted. But I shall leave it to the naturalist, if he thinks it worth while, to go more fully into the question; for it has no deciding force with regard to that under discussion. Were the supposed tendency the actual fact with respect to irrational animals, it would by no means follow that it is so with respect to the rational animal, man. And in his case, we can try the question by the clearest facts.

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## CHAPTER V.

### MR. MALTHUS'S PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION.

APPLYING the general idea respecting animal life to man, Mr. Malthus maintains that *population has a constant tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence*\*. In this he finds the principle of population.

\* Essay on Population, B. i. ch. 1. p. 3.

Before I proceed to examine whether this be a principle established by nature or not, I have to observe, that we should leave out of our consideration the consequences ascribed to this doctrine. However repulsive to our natural feelings they may be, and certainly they are very repulsive, this will not alter the fact, if it be in truth the law of nature. A theorist is not answerable for the consequences which may be deduced from his theory. It is sufficient that he proves his doctrine to be founded on real causes and actual results. However mournful the fact be that a great portion of the human race dies in infancy in the very entrance into life, it is not the less true because it is mournful. And however disheartening and repulsive the doctrine may be, that the increase of population, from being by the arrangement of nature more rapid than that of subsistence, tends to produce poverty and distress, if not checked, this result will not alter the fact, or change the law of nature. It only remains for us to yield to necessity, and adapt our ideas and practice to what nature has imposed upon us. The consequences will be afterwards noticed. And if the case be doubtful, they will have their influence in determining the statistician; but our first object is to ascertain whether this be clearly the law of nature or not; and a con-

sideration of the consequences may bias us; but they will not make the fact other than it is.

The mode which Mr. Malthus has adopted in his essay, is, as has been already noticed, calculated rather to bewilder and mislead, than to ascertain the operating causes in real life. Instead of examining population and subsistence, as they are actually found with respect to each other in all the varieties of the circumstances of districts and of nations, he at once boldly assumes the very thing which is in dispute, and then proceeds to adjust every fact to the view which he was pleased to take of nature. This may suit the establishment of his theory, but it will not satisfy the inquiring statistician. The latter will look at nature as she is in reality, not as she is exhibited in the views of the theorist. And he will not allow any man, however decisive his tone, or bold his assertions, to assume any thing in a question of such importance, but will insist upon having every deduction established fully on plain undistorted facts, facts as they actually exist in real life.

Mr. Malthus begins with laying it down as it were an axiom, that *population has a natural tendency to increase faster than subsistence*. Where is the proof of this? Let us examine what district of earth we choose, and we find no such natural tendency existing. There is a

tendency in the population of a majority of districts and of countries, in ordinary times and ordinary circumstances, *to increase*; and subsistence under the direction of reason and of the regulation of the demand, is *made* to increase along with it, rapidly or slowly according to its own rate, just as clothing, housing, and other articles required by it. But there is no appearance in reality, whatever there may be, in the imagination of theorists, of any constant tendency in population *to over-increase* with respect to subsistence more than with respect to clothing or houses, or any other branch of circulant.

Were it even a law of nature, that animal life increases faster than the nourishment prepared for it in regard to irrational animals, who must be operated upon irresistibly by that law, for their want of reason renders them of themselves utterly helpless, it would not operate against man from the moment he became a cultivator\*. Reason frees him completely from the operation of any such law, except in those cases in which his will has not the means of executing its purpose. It constitutes him a regulator of subsistence, as much as of any other article. But into this we shall have occasion to go more fully hereafter.

How does this assumed law operate? Mr.

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 435.



Malthus informs us, not directly by starving man. "The ultimate check to population," says he, "appears then to be a want of food arising necessarily from the different ratios according to which population and food increase. But this ultimate check is never the immediate check, except in cases of actual famine \*."

Here Mr. Malthus, in laying down his fundamental position, first affirms that a cause operates perpetually and with such strength as is sufficient to overpower population in its natural progress, and to regulate its numbers against the *constant efforts* of nature, and then he affirms in the second place, that it does not act directly, that is, in reality, it does not act at all, "except in cases of actual famine†." This is,

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, B. I. ch. 2. p. 17.

† This author, I am called upon to say, though he makes general observations of the boldest kind, and with the most decisive tone, contrives for the most part, when he enters upon the detail, so to limit them or explain them away, that it is difficult to ascertain what is really his opinion. Whether this proceeds from uncleanness in his views upon this subject, as well as an imperfect knowledge of the real principles of circulation, or from his finding facts on every side so strongly against his general theoretical views, when he enters on the consideration of particulars, I know not. But often, after having, as I conceived, made out his opinion, I have presently found some limitation or explanation that unsettled me again. I thought

is fact, a cause and no cause. It is to imagine a cause in theory, and to uncause it in practice. It is to suppose a mighty power constantly operating in nature, and yet not acting at all except on some particular occasions.

To assume for a moment such a principle; when we turn to actual fact, seems strange. Had nature, in a fit of malevolence and stupidity, adopted so extraordinary a system of arrangement, equally barbarous and absurd, one of the two following results must have taken place. This constant tendency in population to increase more rapidly than subsistence, would have produced so strong a reaction in the counteracting principle, as to prevent all increase of population whatever. Indeed the pernicious influence of so severe a repressing power, would so break its energy and disturb its operation, as to produce generally a retrogressive movement. Or what is more likely, for the increase of population tends naturally to augment the average amount both of employment and wealth, and, of course, the demand for human hands; it would place the whole human race in a state of constantly recurring actual famine, as in the cases excepted.

I had caught him, but he had slipped out of my hands. More than once I have closed his book in despair of ascertaining either what he really meant to affirm; or what he really meant to deny.

The result in the excepted cases is granted. The power supposed by Mr. Malthus to reside constantly in subsistence, does actually belong to it, in real famine. It then regulates the amount of that portion of population, which is in this dreadful predicament. Here there is no imagination. The influence is felt to be terribly real. These famines spring partly out of the regulating power of the demand. This, as in other cases, adjusts the amount of the supply of subsistence so nicely to its own amount, that if in any year the supply happens to be very deficient, the result is famine.

But is there any appearance of either of these results commonly taking place in nature? No. The directly contrary. Population, far from being generally decreasing, is upon the average, and as it has for the most part been from the commencement of history, on the increase. And there is also, upon the average, an evident abundance of subsistence.

Indeed Mr. Malthus has said that the assumed law of nature does not act directly by starving. Had he asserted that it did, he would have only excited a smile. It is, he affirms generally, by creating poverty and distress, but he has not shown us in detail how this effect is produced. And indeed, as we shall see afterwards, this is as directly contrary to facts as constant starvation. The increase

of population uniformly produces a greater average amount of wealth among all ranks, and *equally enables the cultivator more effectually to supply the demand on him, and all ranks to eat and drink more luxuriously, that is, in greater abundance.*

But next for what Mr. Malthus calls the *immediate check*, or the strictly regulating power. "The immediate check may be stated to consist in all those customs and all those diseases which seem to be generated by a scarcity of the means of subsistence; and all those causes, independent of this scarcity, whether of a moral or physical nature, which tend prematurely to weaken and destroy the human frame \*."

The latter causes, whatever be their force or effect, and they, in reality, include the whole of the counteracting causes, have evidently nothing to do in the present question respecting subsistence, for they are stated to be independent of the supposed scarcity. These therefore, according to his own acknowledgment, are not under the control of subsistence. And the former, or *those customs and diseases which seem to be generated by a scarcity of the means of subsistence*, depend, as he himself affirms, on the real existence of the supposed scarcity of

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, B. i. ch. 1. p. 17.

the means of subsistence. Where then is the proof of this universal deficiency? Nothing of the sort exists. Occasionally indeed there are deficiencies; but they are merely local.

Where then is that iron wall of necessity, which inclosed the whole human race, as it were in a besieged place, or kept them in the state of a certain number of men and women cast away upon an island, which only afforded subsistence for the present number? That dreadful wall, which alarmed the benevolent with the incessant fear of famine, as well as cut off all prospect of a melioration of circumstances, in the act of explanation, degenerates into some equivocal customs, and some diseases, as equivocal, "which seem to be generated by a scarcity of the means of subsistence." The author of the *Happiness of States*, who maintains that men have as unlimited a control over food, as over houses and clothing, admits an influence in the first as great as this; only he derives it chiefly from abundance\*. This horrible circumvallation, which threw so dark a gloom over human affairs, and which has frightened so many worthy people, when seen through the fog of general theoretical assertions, vanishes in the hands of this theorist himself, when he comes to a particular exhibition. It is

\* *Happiness of States*, B. vi, ch. 4, p. 461.

found to be a mere shadow. Mankind may proceed, as formerly, to obey the voice of nature and of virtue, and yet flourish and be happy.

But farther, the principles of circulation afford an unerring standard with regard to the states of the demand and the supply, compared with each other; or for measuring their respective amounts. This is in price.

When the demand exceeds the supply, the rate of price necessarily rises, and uniformly to an exorbitant pitch, or beyond the amount which would reimburse the supplier for the loss caused by the deficiency of the article. If the deficiency be even the result of mere speculation, this effect takes place, as long as the speculator can create this artificial scarcity, and to a pitch corresponding to its extent. This, however, is from its nature temporary; and when the influence of the speculator ceases, the price falls generally as rapidly as it rose. When it is real, that is, actually existing in nature, the result takes place without any artifice on the part of the supplier; and if it be constant without any hope of ultimately raising the supply fully to the demand, the exorbitance of price will increase and go on with little or no tendency to abate.

This is particularly true of articles of the first necessity, because they are necessary, and

must be bought if circulators can procure them. Within the last twenty years we have several times seen to what an immoderate pitch the imagination of scarcity and the arts of speculators raised the price of corn. "Facts," says Mr. Gray, "will almost bear out the affirmation, that the cries of scarcity for the last twenty years have been uniformly fictitious\*." At any rate the deficiency of grain was but small, as appears from comparing the imports of those years reckoned abundant and those considered deficient. The difference even in the memorable year 1801 was only about 1,200,000 quarters†. And the increased consumption of bread, from the exorbitant price of grain, was greater than that amount‡: for a high price of corn increases the consumption. It forces the lower ranks, who live at all times principally on bread, to live still more upon it than in lower priced years, as they cannot afford to buy the usual quantity of meat§. "A few shillings per quarter would have reimbursed the cultivator." And yet the price of wheat rose from fifty to ninety shillings above the fair average price.

*Does then the common average price of food*

\* Happiness of States, B. vii. ch. 9. p. 547, note.

† Id. B. vii. ch. vii. p. 521.

‡ Id. ib.

§ Id. B. 7. ch. 5. p. 504.

*show any symptom of a perpetual excess in the demand above the supply?* No. The average profits of the farmer are only such as are made by other dealers. Occasionally, from a deficiency, real or supposed, his prices have risen far beyond the fair average rate, or such a rate as will yield the cultivator a fair profit; and occasionally from a more than usual abundance, the prices have fallen below the average rate. But in the greater number of years his prices have been fair; and including these rises and falls, the average rate of his prices has been fair, or in a due proportion to those of the other classes of circulators, whose articles, like his, are subject to occasional rises and falls in price, and for the same reasons. His prices, on the universal average, have yielded only a rate of wages for the labourer, and of profit for the farmer and landowner corresponding with that of the other classes. Indeed, comparing similar rank with rank, and allowing for peculiarities of circumstances, we shall find, that the average rate of the prices of the cultivating class, is lower than that of some other classes, for example the manufacturing and the legal.

As far as the imperfect notions in statistics transmitted to us from former times enable us to judge, there was no difference between the average rate of prices of the cultivator and that of the prices of other circulators. In common



times the prices were fair: on the occasion of scarcity they rose to a more or less exorbitant rate; and when more abundant seasons came, they fell below the average.

It may be said, that the high price of subsistence, caused by the natural deficiency of supply, would tend to attract a greater number of circulators to that line, and, consequently, by increasing the supply, be the means of keeping the price at a fair rate. This is admitted. Such an effect, according to the laws of circulation, must be produced. But it proves the reverse of what is affirmed by our subsistence theorists. It demonstrates, that the impulse given by the increasing demand was sufficient in subsistence, as in every other branch of circulation, to raise the supply to the increased demand, and thus keep the former fully up to the latter. The fair average price of subsistence is a decisive proof of this result being completely effected.

Where then exists the tendency in population to over-increase, or of subsistence to limit? Not in real life. Both tendencies are mere imaginations.

It might be asked here generally, as it will be afterwards more particularly, on what ground has food been selected as being the sole article in human supplies that regulates the number of the demanders. It is indeed ne-

cessary to the life of man: but so is air, and so is heat, though no regulating or limiting power is annexed to them. Clothes and houses, in many regions, are nearly as necessary. And the abundance of food has little, if any, more real influence on population (it is meant, of the augmenting kind) than the abundance of clothes or houses.

But population has a natural tendency to double itself in a much shorter term of years, than it has actually done. Then why has it not doubled itself more rapidly? Or why has the earth not reached its full complement long ago? Whatever be the cause, it is not from a want of the means of subsistence. As far as depended on these means it might have increased at any rate of rapidity whatever. It was only necessary to set apart a larger proportion of population to the work of cultivating the ground.

There is scarcely a district of any extent upon the globe, where there is not abundance of waste, or imperfectly cultivated land, and where population could not supply the cultivator with an additional number of hands to any amount which he should ask, if he had a demand. An immense portion of the earth is scarcely peopled at all. Even Europe itself, at this day, Mr. Gray informs us, is barely peopled to the one fifth of the population

which she is capable of subsisting \*. What is there then to have prevented population from procuring any additional supply of subsistence from these stores, which it wanted, if it did really want them? True, it required labour to get at these stores; but they could have been got at, had a real demand urged the cultivator. Population has not applied to them yet; and, therefore, it has not wanted them. It has fully obtained without them all that it did want.

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE DIFFERENT NATURAL RATIOS OF INCREASE  
SUPPOSED BY MR. MALTHUS TO BELONG TO PO-  
PULATION AND SUBSISTENCE.

NOT contented with maintaining in general, that population has a tendency to increase faster than subsistence, Mr. Malthus has even ventured to give us a comparative statement of their respective forces, or natural tendencies to increase. The former he considers *as increasing, when unchecked, in the geometrical ratio: the latter as increasing, under the greatest ef-*

\* Happiness of States, B. v. ch. 8. p. 422.

*farts of human skill and industry only in the arithmetical\*.*

Alluding to this, though, as usual, no name is mentioned †, Mr. Gray says: "The natural progress of population has been stated to be in the geometrical proportion, or as 1, 2, 4, 8, and that of subsistence only in the arithmetical, or as 1, 2, 3, 4. This is a loose unphilosophical comparison, even if it were founded in fact: it throws no light whatever on the subject, and is only calculated to mislead. But it is unfounded and incorrect. The progression both of population and subsistence, when

\* Essay on Population, B. i. ch. 1.

† In the Happiness of States, the author seems studiously to avoid attacking any of his numerous opponents by name. This is neither from an unacquaintance with them, nor a disregard of them; but rather from the reverse of the latter. Having occasion to differ so essentially with so many statisticians of high name, it might be becoming as well as prudent, in the first instance, to confine himself to mere opinions. In endeavouring to ascertain the leading principles, causes and results in statistics, it might also be more calculated to reach what is true, to attend to arguments alone, whatever be the reputation or the obscurity of the user. This mode of considering reasons only is certainly the more philosophical, but it may be queried whether it be the most popular, at least at first. Those well acquainted with the subject will soon perceive the authors from the opinions examined; but the rawer student will be sometimes at a loss. Besides, the public seems to have a taste for a little of the acid of personality.

compared with the progress of time, may be either arithmetical or geometrical, or in any other proportion. It may be either as 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 2, 4, 8, or  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , 2, or 1,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , 3, 5: in short, according to every possible ratio, regular or irregular.

“With respect to subsistence, and the same thing is true of population, it is not capable of the arithmetical or any other species of progression beyond a certain extent, and that extent pretty ascertainable. You can cultivate any given quantity of ground to its utmost capability of producing, both from its natural powers, and those artificial powers added to these by the cultivator; and beyond this all progression stops. No power of man, with all his artificial stimulants, can make it produce more. And this progress of capability has very little connexion with the progress of time, except for, perhaps, two or three seasons. A given spot of ground may produce the least quantity which it ever produced, this year, and in three, or, at most, four years time, I imagine, it may be made by the exertions of the cultivator to produce the greatest quantity that it is capable of producing: while under more sluggish or unskilful hands, it may require a thousand or two thousand years to reach the same *ne plus ultra* of fertility. To say then, without limitation, that subsistence is capable of increasing

in an arithmetical progress, on any given territory, is contrary to fact and the laws of nature. The arithmetical ratio has nothing at all naturally to do with the progress of soil in producing from its least to its greatest possible quantity. That depends entirely on the skill and exertions of the cultivator, and may be in every possible ratio, regular or irregular, occasionally advancing slowly or rapidly, and occasionally retrograding rapidly or slowly. But beyond a certain degree of cultivation, it cannot be made to advance any further.

“To affirm that population increases in a geometrical progression, is to say as little to the purpose. If by this is meant to compare its progress with respect to time, and to assert that any given number of men, in a certain number of years, regularly in a majority of cases doubles itself, it is utterly unfounded in fact. Nothing varies more than the progress of population. Whether it be increasing or decreasing, the ratio is perfectly desultory and irregular, as it depends on a thousand arbitrary, accidental and occasional causes. And a certain given population on a certain given spot, may, owing to circumstances, be doubled perhaps in twenty or thirty years, and another given population of the same number originally may, owing to other circumstances, not be doubled or not at all increased, in twenty or

thirty hundred years. Should the causes that operate to increase population, speaking generally of mankind, be superior in their influence to those which tend to counteract them and diminish it, and it is probable that this has hitherto been the fact, population of course is making a geometrical progression, but without any regularity as to time.

“ But if again we compare the progress of population not with the progress of time, but the progress of subsistence, then the history of six thousand years proves the falsehood of the position, that the progress of the former is naturally geometrical, while the latter is only arithmetical. They are equal or nearly so in their movements, as must be the case from the nature of things, and as is proved by uniform experience. There are occasional differences, but, on a general average, the progress of subsistence is entirely governed by the progress of population. Indeed, on the whole, it has a tendency rather to be quicker, because the mass of cultivators commonly make a point of cultivating every year more than the last, as far as in their power, till they are checked by some causes either natural or artificial, regular or accidental. The progress of subsistence is geometrical or arithmetical, or irregular, as to given time, according as population is permanently so. A permanent increase or de-

crease of the latter produces a permanent increase or decrease of the former \*."

As we have already noticed, and as will be shown more fully in the next chapter, *there is no natural or fixed ratio of increase in population, with respect to time* : and subsistence has of itself no natural ratio of increase whatever. In a state of nature, its amount depends entirely upon the character of the season with respect to geniality ; and perhaps, on an average of situations, that amount is nearly if not completely stationary.

It is only when man applies his labour and skill, that it is capable of increase. All its increase is, therefore, artificial. Of itself it is altogether passive. The rate of increase being thus entirely impressed, and indeed forced, upon it, whatever be the rate at which it is augmented, is the work of man, and is given to it by him as a regulator, working under the guidance of reason to supply his demands. It will, therefore, always be according to the rate of the increase of the demanders, whatever that be, rapid or slow, as nearly as he can make it.

In a state of nature the earth seems in general to be very infertile. It is only upon the banks of rivers, or other portions which are occasionally enriched by irrigations or other na-

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 2. p. 429—431.



tural manurings, that it approaches at all near the fertility to which it is capable of being raised by man. Mr. Gray considers the natural fertility of the soil, on an average, not equal to the one-thirtieth part of the artificial fertility, which may be created by the skill and labour of man \*. And the progress in fertilizing is caused by, and, therefore, regulated by the increasing demand arising from an increasing population.

Let then any part of population increase at the geometrical rate with respect to time, and what is there in nature to prevent it from raising subsistence up to its demands, as long as there are any additional means of subsistence? If the former, when it increases from 1 to 2, can raise the subsistence from 1 to 2, why can it not raise that supply according to the same proportion, from 2 to 4 and from 4 to 8, when itself increases from 2 to 4 or from 4 to 8? It has only to employ the same or a larger proportion of the increased number in the business of this supply, and the result will be as fully accomplished.

The clashing of the two principles of increase must cause a constant deficiency of supply. A difference so vast between the natural ratio of increase of population and subsistence,

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 437.

would indeed necessarily produce a perpetual recurrence of universal and most destructive famines. True, the destruction of life might frequently be so great as to make subsistence get an advance upon population. But the more rapid movement of the latter would, in the course of a few years, fill up the deficiency, and then another universal famine would take place. Now is there any resemblance of such universal famines in real life?

But really this is a waste of argument. It is reasoning against a mere imagination. It is combating a shadow. These different ratios ascribed to population and subsistence, though like some other theoretical notions, they have attracted a much larger share of attention, than many solid truths of high importance, are so unlike any thing in real life; they are, indeed, so contrary to facts, and founded upon such absurd views of subsistence, that if the author had not still persisted in preserving them, I should not have considered it worth while to give them any particular attention. I should have treated them as rash puerile imaginations unworthy of notice. It would be doing injustice to the general doctrine of a tendency in population to increase faster than subsistence, to consider such untenable absurdities as essential parts of it. They do not necessarily belong to it, and, therefore, I shall

consider them only as particular views of Mr. Malthus, and not as necessarily connected with the subsistence theory \*.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### HAS POPULATION ANY REGULAR NATURAL RATIO OF INCREASE COMPARED WITH TIME ?

MR. Malthus has derived most of his theoretical deductions from a fundamental assumption of his, that population has a natural tendency, when unchecked by a deficiency of subsistence and the effects of that deficiency, to double itself in a somewhat regular time; and he considers this period to be about twenty-five years †.

This assumption is utterly unwarranted. In a certain state of the stimulative and counteracting circumstances, this will be the natural rate of progress, but not in any other. If there were any natural rate of progress for popula-

\* This has been called by Mr. Gray also the *antipopulation theory*. The title *subsistence theory* is more characteristic, for subsistence is almost the sole regulator in it. Mr. Gray's theory, on the other hand, for the same reason, may be called the *population theory*.

† Essay on Population, B. i. ch. 1 p. 9.

tion; it would be that of man in his original state of nature, or probably enough, that of the hunter. The rate of the increase of population in that state, however, though it might be the first, is only the rate of the progress of population in that state, and not in that of the herdsman, the cultivator, or the manufacturer and merchant, or of all more or less combined. There is, therefore, no such fixed rate. *The natural progress of population is its increase arising out of the whole of its circumstances\**. As has been already observed, *it is the force of the general and particular stimulating circumstance, corrected by that of the general and particular counteracting circumstances, in which any division of population is placed, that regulates the rate of its increase.*

In nothing is there more difference than in the actual progress of population. Perhaps in no two states is the same rate found; nor even in the same state at different periods. To affirm then that, according to the natural ratio, population would double itself in about twenty-five years, is to affirm what is not merely unwarranted by facts, but directly contrary to them; except in a particular combination of

\* See the 8th chapter of the 4th Book of the Happiness of States, which treats of the *Progress of Population compared with Time.*

the stimulative and counteracting circumstances. In all other combinations of these circumstances, it is untrue.

The ratio adopted is that of a certain portion of population in America. "But the ratio of increase in the population of the United States of America, is no more to be taken for the natural ratio of the increase of population, because it is the quickest, than that of another because it is the slowest. The ratio of increase of the population of those states, is the natural progress of population for a country in their circumstances, but not for another; suppose China, in which the circumstances are in many cases reversed. It is the natural progress of a certain portion of American population at present, but not of British, Spanish, French, Swedish, Russian, or German. Population is essentially connected with territory, climate, diet, education and other circumstances, and it is affected, consequently, by their permanent or temporary varieties. The natural ratio of the increase of population for earth is its increase, as found promoted or checked by the various circumstances of all its states. And it would be most likely to be found in a country, which is the medium between the most rapidly increasing and the most slow, because such a ratio, it is probable, would be the nearest to

the general ratio of the increase of population \*."

The limitation is made *when unchecked*. What is the meaning of this? What state of population does or can exist unchecked? "If we must theorize as visionaries on the progress of population when unchecked, we should take it as it would have been in a state of paradise, where men would never have died. In such a case, supposing marriage to take place at puberty from the uniform health of all existing, and from all produced living for ever, and we may suppose, breeding for ever, we should have had an example of the progress of population when unchecked. But in America, population though less checked for half a century till very lately, than in most other countries, was checked by the seeds of mortality sown in the human constitution, by diseases, by accidents, by the unfavourable circumstances of some districts, and latterly by a more common use of a super-sufficient quantity of subsistence from the increase of capital, growth of towns, and the introduction of luxury †."

Were we to give loose to the fancy in creating imaginary states, we might theorize much of the same sort about the increase of subsistence. On this topic, Mr. Gray says, "Po-

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 358.

† Ib. p. 357.

pulation, were it unchecked by the circumstances in which Providence has placed men, would be in its nature infinite, or go on doubling itself for ever. Subsistence is also in its nature infinite. If this were not checked by natural circumstances, it would continue doubling itself for ever in a still more rapid manner. A grain of wheat, if the produce of it, and the produce of this produce, and so on, were sown year after year, would in a few centuries supply wheat for the whole of the present population of earth \*."

We have many practical proofs how rapidly any species of vegetable may be made to increase. Out of many we may quote the potato-oat, which from a handful in a few years became the prevailing species of oat in Scotland and the north of England. But, as Mr. Gray asks, "what do observations of this kind tend to?" On the subject which we are discussing, they do not lead us to any practical conclusion. They only serve to mix mere fancy and ideal speculation with real causes and facts.

Mr. Malthus's supposition of a certain rate of doubling being natural to population is utterly unwarranted. It is grounded on a mere assumption of something that might be, and not upon what has been, or can be, generally; and

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 357.

therefore it has no title whatever to be reckoned a general or natural rate. On the arrangements of nature, population has no fixed or regular ratio of increase.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SYSTEM OF CHECKS,

MR. Malthus, in explaining his theory, and adjusting facts to his theoretical views, has recourse to a system of what he calls *checks*.

This system is evidently derived from a theoretical *ex parte* view of the subject, and not from it as exhibited in all its natural extent in real life. It is founded upon a comparison of the increase of population not with its actual circumstances, but with some imaginary states. Indeed the grand source of the errors of the subsistence theory may be traced to the setting up of this comparison, and deducing principles from it. This system, therefore, should be rejected by the inquiring statistician, as founded upon something not proved, and which is in fact false.

It would have been just as correct to have taken the rate of increase of population among tribes in the savage state as the natural rate of



increase, from its being that of a state of nature (and generally the slowest), and to have measured the rates of other increases up to the highest from this: to show the force of the stimulating causes in overpowering the counter-acting.

But farther, it is partial and incomplete. It tends to mislead, and to turn the attention of the student from the subject, as it is set before him by nature, to a partial, distorted and erroneous view of it. In real life the stimulating circumstances or causes of the progress of population are of equal prominence, and are seen as constantly in action, as the counteracting or antipopulating circumstances or causes. And both in theory and practice they are, consequently, of equal importance. But, on the subsistence theory, the former are in a manner sunk to make room for the latter. This mode of viewing the subject only on one side, and in fact considering only the half of it, were it not connected with a radical error, should therefore be avoided, as calculated to narrow the views of the student, and injure his progress in this portion of the science of statistics.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
WHICH EXHIBITS SO HIGH A RATE OF INCREASE  
IN A GREAT MASS OF POPULATION, DECISIVE  
AGAINST THE SUBSISTENCE THEORY.

It is perfectly evident from facts, as we have seen, that there is no particular ratio of doubling, when measured by time, which can be considered as the natural or general ratio of the increase of population. Mr. Malthus has indeed assumed, that the ratio of doubling in the United States of America is the natural ratio of the increase of population. But this position is to be rejected as contrary to facts.

The period of doubling in a large portion of the population of those states has, I believe, been really found to be what he states it, about twenty-five years. The fact, however, proves the very reverse of what it is brought by him to prove. If population can double itself in twenty-five years, and the increase of subsistence can be fully brought up to this rate, and the history of a certain portion of American population shows that it can, why then does it not double itself, in the same time, in all other

districts of the earth, while there is soil sufficient to allow the cultivator to augment the home subsistence up to that pitch, or else the importer to procure the difference from other districts? According to the law of nature in circulation, *the demand regulates the supply as far as this is dependent on the will*. If there exist the same increasing rate of demand in other districts, as in the United States, there will also be the same increasing rate of supply, provided there be soil sufficient. But there is scarcely in any other region of great extent, a similar increase of population, and yet in all countries there is abundance of uncultivated or imperfectly cultivated land. It cannot, therefore, be a deficiency of subsistence, from which this lower rate of the increase of population is derived. The inferior rate of the demand must spring from some other cause, than the quantum of subsistence; for the supply of that could have been increased in them as fast as in the United States, had the demand been as great.

This argument is decisive. It proves incontestably, 1. *that this rate of doubling is not the natural rate of the increase of population, when the means of subsistence are adequate to meet that demand*; and, 2. *that, as population in general does not rise to any rate of increase at all approaching that of the United States, while the supply of subsistence in them shows*

*that it can be raised to that rate when the demand requires it, there is so far from being an universal tendency in population to increase faster than the means of subsistence admit, that it seldom or never rises even near to the rate at which those means would enable the cultivator to augment his supply.*

It may perhaps be affirmed, that other districts do not afford the means of subsistence so amply as the back settlements of America. This is far from being the fact. The soil of those settlements is not favourable to the cultivator beyond the average degree of other waste districts, but the reverse. The lands have much natural unfitness and present many obstructions. The clearing of them and putting them in a state fit for tilling, are a task of ineffable labour. And after they are in a state of cultivation, we have the information of Mr. Parkinson, and other practical observers, that the average return per acre is very low. The deficiency of capital and the vast distance from markets for the sale of the superfluous produce, are also great disadvantages. In short, nothing but the enthusiasm of the more restless, active, and robust adventurers from various countries, and the necessity of going on after they have begun, could enable them to execute their projects of cultivation in districts that present so many formidable obstacles.

But were it a fact, that these wastes were naturally more favourable to the cultivator, it would prove nothing. Subsistence being an absolute necessary, the demand must be uncontrollable, unless by physical impossibility. Population must and will raise the supply of this necessary to its full demand on the average of years, as long as these means are in its power. And they are in its power till it reaches its complement. If these means, therefore, be not exhausted to the American rate, it must surely be from some other reason than an increase in the demand for the supply of what they can afford.

It arises from the pursuits of the great mass being less healthy and more defecundating, and other circumstances possessing the same tendency. In the back settlements of North America the pursuits of nearly the entire mass are favourable to health and prolificness. Let the great mass of people not employed in cultivation, in any other country equally healthy with those settlements, be taken from their present employments, by a change in the demand, and follow the employments of the new settlers, and however much slower their present rate of increase is, it would rise to somewhat like that of this mass of land-clearers and cultivators,

## CHAPTER X.

## A GENERAL VIEW OF THE EFFECT OF THE QUANTUM OF SUBSISTENCE ON POPULATION, WITH A RECAPITULATION.

IN analyzing the stimulating circumstances, it is doubtful, whether *mere abundance* of subsistence has any great degree of that influence which has been attributed to it. But in analyzing the counteracting circumstances or checks, the influence of subsistence is unequivocal.

Indeed, it is not a deficiency of subsistence, as the subsistence theory imagines, which has the antipopulating effect. The influence of that is trifling, except in case of actual famine, which sometimes happens in hot climates. It is an abundance of subsistence which has a strong influence as a check. Luxury, or an excess of eating and drinking, tends to defecundate, or to diminish the number of births, as well as to shorten the lives of those who are born. And this powerful influence seems to increase in efficacy in proportion as population grows more numerous.

Thus so far are the ideas of the subsistence theory, with respect to abundance from corresponding with facts, that they are very much in

direct opposition to these. On that theory abundance of subsistence has a strong tendency to increase population, while scantiness of subsistence has as strong a tendency to diminish it. But in real life, while scantiness of subsistence tends strongly to increase the number of births, superfluity tends as strongly to diminish that number, and to render the smaller number born, short-lived.

To recapitulate: the principle of population, according to the population theory, is clearly the doctrine of nature. *Population has a tendency, in all ordinary cases, to increase, but not to over-increase*; for the increase carries in itself the power of more effectually supplying the additional wants. The principle of the subsistence theory is so evidently contrary to facts, that had statisticians fairly examined it by these, or by the real causes operating in the progress of population, and the actual results, instead of assenting to it or acquiescing in it, as so many of them did, when this was first broached, they would have unanimously rejected it. The notion of a constant tendency in even irrational animals to increase faster than the nourishment prepared for them, is an unwarranted fancy; but when this dogma is extended to the rational animal man, it is directly contrary to the clearest facts. The abundance of *additional means of subsistence, withdrawn upon,*

in all old-peopled countries of any extent, after the lapse of thousands of years, refutes at once the notion. The average rate of the price of subsistence, which is fair, and corresponds with the average rate of other articles, is equally decisive against the imagination. As for the idea of the natural ratio of the increase of population being geometrical, while the natural ratio of the increase of subsistence is only arithmetical, it is utterly false. Indeed it is an absurdity. Population has no regular natural ratio of increase, when compared with time. Its rate of increase varies in every country according to the state of the general and particular stimulating circumstances, combined with the state of the general and particular counteracting circumstances. Subsistence, again, when the produce is spontaneous, seems little capable of any increase at all. When the produce is artificial, it has evidently no ratio of increase of itself. The ratio is entirely impressed upon it, or given to it by the cultivator. The rapid doubling of population in the back settlements of North America proves the direct contrary to what it has been adduced to prove. It shows, that if men had found a demand for subsistence increasing much more rapidly than it has done, they could have increased the supply fully up to that amount.

In sum, the notion of a constant tendency in



*subsistence to increase less rapidly than population, and consequently to check the latter by scarcity, is a wild fancy, utterly unknown to nature, and in as direct opposition to the results of her arrangements, as any such tendency in clothing, building, or any other division of the supply.*

## BOOK II.

DOES POPULATION REGULATE SUBSISTENCE, AS MR. GRAY AFFIRMS, OR SUBSISTENCE POPULATION, AS IS MAINTAINED BY MR. MALTHUS?

### CHAPTER I.

THE REGULATING POWER ATTRIBUTED TO  
POPULATION.

It is an universal law of nature in circulation, as has been shown by Mr. Gray, that *the demand regulates the supply, as far as this is dependent on the will of man* \*. “More of any article than can be brought into circulation, is of no use. What cannot be circulated, can produce no profit: and indeed what cannot be used, might as well not exist.

“In practice we see the regulating power of the demand uniformly acting with respect to every article, from that which is used most, or by the greatest number, to that which is used least, or by the smallest number. The quantity of land cultivated for growing corn or feeding cattle, for example, is regulated by the de-

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 5.

mand for corn and cattle; for what would be the use, or profit, of raising more corn, or feeding more cattle, than can be disposed of in a proper time, and at a proper price? A cultivator might just as well toil and spend his money in raising weeds, or feeding rats, as in raising wheat, or feeding sheep and bullocks, beyond the quantity of the latter, that can be disposed of to the consumers. And what would be the use of the ribbon or muslin manufacturer's making more ribbons or muslins, than can be sold at a fair price; or yet of a mason's building more houses, than the population requires? Instead of making profit, they would lose both their time and their money. The superfluous quantity would indeed be worse than useless. It would diminish the price even of the quantity really wanted, and render the whole a losing business \*."

The number of suppliers of any species of article, is also regulated by the same law. "The demand, therefore, necessarily regulates the quantity of any particular species of circulant, and, of course, the number of hands employed in producing or preparing it. Were more hands to labour at producing any species of article, than the consumption required, for example, hats, either the whole could not get

\* Happiness of States, B. ii, ch. 5. p. 78,

full employment, or some of the worse hands could not get employment at all. Did this superfluity of workmen exist in the nation at large, as well as in the countries connected with it in traffic, with respect to any given article, a languor would take place through the whole class. Wages would fall, and from its being found an unthriving class, some hands would leave it for a more thriving one; and fewer young people would be bred to it, till the equilibrium between the producers and consumers were restored again. Indeed, from its having become an unpopular class, the decrease would go on, till there were too few to supply fully the real demand, and then it might become a favourite well-employed class again. But if the superfluity of hands be confined to a town, parish, or district, the individuals that cannot find sufficient employment, must emigrate to some other place, where additional hands are wanted in the line.

“The general exact agreement between the supply and the demand is thus fully accounted for. *The regulating principle is universal, and of a powerful, steady, unremitting influence, as it is essentially connected with self-interest, and often even with necessity.\**”

Nor is an adjustment of the supply pretty

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 5. p. 79.

accurately to the demand, so uncertain a result as it may seem at first sight. "If we analyze the supply of any article, however generally it may be used, and however great may be the number employed in producing it, we shall see clearly how it is done without any particular combination among the producers. Each labouring unconnectedly in his own circle, to promote his own self-interest, is able to equalize the supply with the demand as effectually, as if he laboured in consequence of a combination formed expressly for the purpose. Let us examine the supply of London, or any other market, with meat, which is so extensive an article, and depends on so many hands.

"Were a greater number of bullocks, sheep, &c. to be brought to market, than the consumption requires, buyers could not be found. If they are kept alive, their feed becomes expensive; and as meat cannot be preserved a long time even at the coldest season of the year, to kill more than can be immediately disposed of would expose the butcher to certain loss. Thus both the feeder and the butcher must endeavour to render the supply no greater than the demand, but as nearly as possible equal to it. Nor is this difficult.

"The quantity of meat consumed by families is very regular. These for the most part

buy from one butcher: every butcher, therefore, can calculate with tolerable accuracy what he must purchase to supply his regular customers; and, by means of his usual sale, he can guess pretty well at the quantity required for chance or occasional buyers. The butcher thus knows with much exactness the number he must buy. The farmer, or feeder, again, is seldom obliged to sell on a certain day. He can choose a week, or even a month, sooner or later, as circumstances require. His object is a high price. If the prices be low, he knows the market must be over-supplied; and, therefore, he will wait a week or two, and be at the expense of feeding during this additional time, rather than run the risk of selling his cattle at an under value, or sending them again.

“ From his own experience, or the practice of his predecessors, he knows the number which it is profitable for him to feed, both to suit the quality of his soil, and answer the purposes of his farm, as well as to supply the markets to which he usually sends them. The same regulating power of the price and demand operates through every district upon each feeder in his little circle. Self-interest, assisted by experience, thus makes the whole class of farmers, though each may be acting pretty unconnectedly with respect to the circle around him, and indeed to all the rest, produce a

supply to the national demand for meat, as accurately, as if they acted expressly in conjunction, and according to a regular calculation\*.

It is thus evident, that the quantity of subsistence is as completely under the regulation of man, as either clothing, housing, or any other branch of circuland, and will continue so till (if such a period should ever arrive) the land and waters cannot be made to supply fully the amount wanted.

The regulating power of population, under the influence of the demand, is seen every where, both with respect to kind and quantity. "The farmer is guided, as far as the nature of his soil and climate will permit, by the kind of subsistence which is in demand in his neighbourhood, or in those districts in which he finds a market. If his chief demand be for wheat, he directs his attention chiefly to the production of wheat. In those districts, where oats are used for bread, he will apply himself principally to the growing of oats. If barley be eaten for bread, or if there be a great demand for it in his neighbourhood for making beer, he will direct his attention particularly to barley. And when his lands lie near a large town, or when from the increase of population, and a consequent increase of wealth and luxury

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 5. p. 81.

among all ranks, he finds an increasing demand for meat, he, of course, turns his attention more to green crops and raising cattle. In this last case, if his father, or the person who had the same farm, suppose of a hundred acres, twenty years ago, applied regularly about sixty acres of it to wheat and other grain, and kept only forty for pasture, or for growing clover and turnips, he now uses fifty-five or any other quantity, for the latter purpose, and only forty-five for the former to meet the ratio of the demand. Perhaps, however, in many cases, from additional capital, and particularly the additional manure which he obtains from feeding more cattle, he may raise more grain on the forty-five acres than his predecessors did on the sixty.

“Thus farmers, from being assisted in their calculations by the number of acres used for different purposes by their predecessors, and from their own experience and observations with respect to the predominant demands, become extremely accurate in adjusting the supply to the consumption \*.”

Were it necessary to go into particulars on this important subject, the most striking proofs and illustration of the absolute regulating power of population over subsistence might be

\* *Happiness of States*, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 440.



given. Indeed we cannot turn to any portion of any district, but we see the regulating influence of man operating as completely in eatables, as in building, clothing, teaching, &c. Out of numberless examples take one or two. The district round London is applied to raising grass and culinary vegetables, and why? To supply the predominant demand, which is for milk, hay, and the wants of the kitchen; while corn and cattle are easier brought from a distance. In the western and northern districts of Scotland they formerly grew chiefly oats, and in the east lowlands, barley, but seldom wheat; because the population lived chiefly, in the one, on oaten, and, in the other, on barley bread. Now they raise much wheat, and they are annually extending this crop, because wheaten bread is more generally eaten, and the use of it is becoming more common every year. We now grow little rye in the island, because it is no longer used except in certain districts; but it is still the predominant crop in the northern districts of Germany, because there the lower ranks still eat chiefly rye bread. But in every district, without exception, is distinctly seen the regulating influence of the demand and the will of man.

And why are cultivators annually taking waste lands into cultivation, where population is increasing? Is it not from their voluntary

endeavours to regulate the supply according to the increased demand? Of course, in this case, to raise the former to the latter, just as the bricklayer and muslin manufacturer do, when there is an increased demand for muslins or for bricks? Or why does the number of the cultivating class increase with the increase of population, as that of the clothing and building classes, while the average amount of their individual exertions keeps augmenting also? Is it not from the enlarged demand operating on self-interest, and tempting a greater number of circulators to apply to husbandry, as to clothing or building?

The analogy is perfect. We see the demand for subsistence adjusting the number of the cultivators, and these, directed by reason and influenced by self-interest, adjusting the supply to the demand as completely, as in the case of any other class of circulators or suppliers.

There is an essential characteristic of man, which distinguishes him from all other animals, and produces an infinite difference between him and them, in this point as in most others. That is reason. It is the faculty which fits him to be a regulator of the supply of subsistence as of other things, and ultimately constitutes him completely so. Other animals remain as at first regulated in these points, and never

can become regulators, though man makes some of them assistants in regulation. But if regulated at first himself, he at length by means of this wonderful faculty becomes a complete regulator.

“Food and men must have been at least coeval. A man cannot exist without food above a few days. If we suppose that man, at his first existence, was placed on earth in a state, such as we now find it in those spots which have not been cultivated by the human hand, and that he was not instinctively urged to cultivate, to render his supplies more certain: in other words, that he was in the mere hunter's state, and existed on what vegetables and animals he could procure; then, unless the supplies of nature were fully sufficient for the existing population, the amount of population must be regulated by the food. In such a state of society, man does not take upon himself to render the supplies of subsistence fully equal to his demand. If nature, therefore, happened to be niggardly, or if, during a long and severe winter, the usual supplies could not be obtained, what little stores the people might have beforehand would soon be consumed; a great portion of them would die through absolute want, and mortal weakness would be introduced into the frames of most that survived the famine.

*“But the moment man began to cultivate, or to give artificial fertility to soils, he took upon himself the regulation of subsistence according to the population. And, if we suppose his race not to have been originally by the inspiration of the Deity, or the instinct of their nature, cultivators or regulators of subsistence; what could urge them to the attempt to cultivate, or produce subsistence for themselves, but the pressure of want from an increasing population? If they originally subsisted by the bounty of nature alone, and were occasionally regulated in their numbers by the quantity of food with which she presented them, an increase of population took this regulating power out of her hands, and of hunters made them regulators, in the character of cultivators and shepherds. And from the moment of their commencing cultivators, they have continued regulators ever since. They manage the native fertility of earth, as well as the additional fertility which they themselves create in it: and they find ample means supplied them, by nature and the effects of increasing population, fully to provide for any increase that takes place, if they make but a proper use of them \*.”*

This great and essential change in the character of man has either not been sufficiently

\* *Happiness of States*, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 434.

attended to by our subsistence theorists, or the full and distinct consideration of it for a very obvious reason avoided. It is, however, a point of the greatest importance in the examination of the subject in discussion. And it completely overturns that theory to the very basis.

If the hunter's state was the original condition of man, his race would be regulated by the actual amount of subsistence produced spontaneously by nature, or independently of his exertions, provided the supply was not beyond the demand. In this state he was no more the regulator of the supply, than the lion, the tiger, or the wolf. Like them he was wholly dependent on the spontaneous supplies of nature. If he became next a feeder, before he reached the rank of cultivator, in this intermediate state he became partly a regulator, but still in an imperfect degree. For, though he could regulate to a certain extent the number of the animals which he kept, yet their feed depended on the spontaneous produce of nature. But when he became a regular cultivator, he became a complete regulator. The whole of the genial powers of nature, with all the artificial stimulants, were subjected to his will. And whether with respect to the subsistence supplied by cattle, and that required by them, or with respect to those other species of food suited to his palate and stomach, with

the exception of fish, he could raise the supply to the amount of his wants, as completely, as he could raise the supply of houses, clothing, and other species of circuland.

It may suit our subsistence theorists to pass lightly over this great era in the history of man and this essential change in his character produced by the application of his characteristical faculty, reason; but every statistician, who wishes to learn the real doctrines of nature, on this important topic, will give it all the serious attention to which it is entitled. I mean, here, of course, those portions of population, which were originally in the mere hunter's state and emerged from it. If the first portion of our race was composed of cultivators, then reason and the human will directed their operations, and consequently, they were regulators from the beginning. The amount of the demand would be that by which they measured the amount of the supply.

But be the condition of the first race of men what it may, the regulating power of the demand has been seen as effective with respect to subsistence in all ages, and in all districts, when men have been cultivators, as with respect to any other article of supply. It also operates at present, and will continue to operate until the earth is peopled to the full amount which it can subsist. And from the

increase in capital and skill, which uniformly springs from the increase of population, the more populous a country, the more complete will be the adjustment of the supply to the demand, in subsistence as in other articles: that is, the more complete the regulating power of population.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE REGULATING POWER ATTRIBUTED TO SUBSISTENCE.

Mr. Malthus evidently attributes a completely regulating power to subsistence over population, or, in his own words, a power "to keep the latter down to the level of the former." That is, the supply regulates the demand in the case of subsistence; for subsistence is the supply with respect to population, the wants of which form the demand.

Let us examine then on what grounds he has set aside one of the clearest laws of nature, in a case, in which it is enforced not merely by profit, but also by strict necessity; nay, actually reversed it.

It is surprising, that Mr. Malthus and others who have discussed the topics which

arise out of the relative connexions between population and subsistence, have not stated the subject in this point of view. The great question at issue lies in this very thing. And I venture to affirm, that the man who was not thoroughly aware of that universal law of nature in all branches of circulation, the regulating power of the demand, was incompetent fully and fairly to discuss the question with respect to population and subsistence according to the actual causes and results in nature. Or if he was fully aware of it, and did not try the question with an express reference to this law, he must show more regard for some theoretical dogmas, than for the progress of sound statistical science.

Mr. Malthus has not put the question on this issue\*, though with respect to man, who is a being endowed with reason, and who adjusts the supply to the demand, it cannot be fully discussed upon any other. Does population regulate subsistence? or subsistence population? That is, in the case of eatables, does

\* We waited for the publication of the Fifth Edition of his Essay on the Principle of Population, to see whether he would at length take the bull by the horns, and fairly discuss the question with a reference to the regulating law in nature, *the law of the demand*. But still he has avoided it. I did, indeed, suspect that he would. But since he has evaded it, I must endeavour to do it for him.



the demand regulate the supply, as in other things, or the supply regulate the demand?

This is the view which has been expressly taken of it in the *Happiness of States*; and whatever be the answer, it certainly renders the subject intelligible and easy, and refers the whole to actual causes and facts. But Mr. Malthus's mode of discussing the subject arises from a theoretical assumption, which he had not proved; and is certainly not true with respect to man. By this also he avoids the grand question, Is not population capable of raising the supply of subsistence, as of other things, to the amount of the demand? and, on mere theoretical grounds, takes the opposite for granted.

Had he viewed the subject with a reference to the regulating law of the demand, as has been done by the author of the *Happiness of States*, it is not improbable but he would have come to the same conclusion with that author. It behoved him at least to show distinctly, at setting out, that the law did not, or could not operate with respect to the food of man. He has chosen not to do so, and we, therefore, ask what is his plea for reversing the law of nature with respect to subsistence.

The statistician will be apt *à priori* to think it strange and very doubtful, that nature should abrogate her own law solely in a case, in which

the comfort and even the existence of her sons required more than in any other, that it should exist; or that man should not have it in his power to regulate the supply of the most necessary of all things, subsistence, according to the demand; though he possessed it amply with respect to all other things. But, if such an abrogation has in fact taken place, or the law of nature with respect to demand and supply be reversed, in the case of subsistence, where is the proof of this, or how does the supply manage the regulating power with respect to it, which the demand manages so completely with respect to other things?

The demand in its regulating operation acts both directly and indirectly. The direct regulating power is not attributed by Mr. Malthus to the supply except in a few cases, in which it unquestionably has a most direct and dreadful regulating power, or actual famines. The indirect regulating power is thus explained generally: "The immediate check may be stated to consist in all those customs and all those diseases, which seem to be generated by a scarcity of the means of subsistence; and all those causes, independent of this scarcity, whether of a moral or physical nature, which tend prematurely to weaken and destroy the human frame\*."

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, B. i. ch. 2. p. 17.

The latter causes being independent of the supposed scarcity, as has been already observed, do not affect the question under discussion. The influence of subsistence in checking and regulating population is found, in certain customs and diseases, which seem to be generated by a scarcity of it. This general or universal scarcity of the means of subsistence amid such vast tracts of uncultivated and imperfectly cultivated land every where, certainly appears to be a thing of very equivocal existence, even on the first view of the subject. To prove its existence, however, Mr. Malthus has taken a survey of the state of most of the leading countries, both in ancient and modern times, with respect to population and subsistence.

Of this survey I have no desire to speak slightly. Some portions of it are valuable, particularly the personal report of the state of Norway. The facts, however, are evidently culled by a theorist who had only one object in view; and there is such a perpetual evident attempting to adjust them to the theory of the surveyor, that the statistician demurs, and is in doubt how far he can depend upon them, or make use of them with safety.

His readers will all allow, that he has been indefatigable in one point: in hunting for human misery. In the chase he has been eminently successful, at least, in finding. Most of

them, however, will be disposed to think that he has borrowed both the eye and fancy of the poet. Determined to find what he wanted, he has frequently seen it where it did not exist, and exaggerated it where it did. In short, the world; through all its nooks, was perhaps never so successfully rummaged before by any theorist for any purpose.

What then is the result of this statistical survey, as far as the subject under examination is concerned? I confine the question here to subsistence. The question, as it respects employment and wealth, will be afterwards particularly discussed. All that we learn from it is, that population and subsistence keep nearly at each other's level. There was no need for making a tour either of ancient or modern countries to ascertain this fact, more than there was, to find out, that houses, clothing, &c. were on a level with population. He might have remained at home as far as this object is concerned, and it would have been fully granted to him. From the great law of nature, *the universally regulating power of the demand*, this equilibrium must necessarily be the average result in all countries in the cultivated state, whether ancient or modern, whether thinly or thickly peopled.

His own surveys, excepting those of regions inhabited by men who are not in the state of

cultivators, are, in fact, all decidedly against his theory. Is there a country peopled by men who are in that state, in which there is not still *a great abundance of the means of additional subsistence in store?* Why then, in the course of so many ages, has not population risen fully to those means of subsistence, or till it exhausted them? A deficiency of these means, of which there is a confessed superabundance every where, cannot surely be the cause.

The result of the survey of earth is this: *Throughout all her regions, for none of any extent can be excepted, after the lapse not of hundreds, but of thousands of years, there is not found one, in which population has at all approached the limits of the subsistence, which it is capable of producing.* How then can it be possible, that it is a general deficiency of subsistence, which has checked the progress of population? The argument is brief, but it is perfectly decisive.

It is said, that though there was an excess of the means of subsistence beyond the actual quantum of population, these were not called forth. What does this prove? Why were they not called forth? Is it necessary that these additional means should be brought to the barn-yard by the farmer, to the mill or to the shambles by the miller or the butcher, or by

the cook to the table, in order to make men populate additionally? The additional means of subsistence in these countries were in store, ready to meet the demand just as they were in the back settlements of America. And had the same demand for food existed, with the same deficiency of demands for other articles, as in those settlements and other new colonies, the same proportion of hands would have been employed to bring this embryo subsistence into mature existence; and the same supply would have been produced till the whole store was exhausted. But this store has been applied to much more sparingly in most countries; and, therefore, no such demand existed.

We shall now be able to appreciate the justness of the following conclusions as far as we can understand them.

“ Must it not then be acknowledged by an attentive examiner of the histories of mankind, that in every age and in every state in which man has existed, or does now exist,

“ The increase of population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence :

“ Population invariably increases when the means of subsistence increase, unless prevented by powerful and obvious checks ?

“ These checks, and the checks which keep the population down to the level of the means

of subsistence, are moral restraints, vice, and misery \*."

1. "*The increase of population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence.*"

I have no wish to carp; but I must observe, that this conclusion, important as it is intended to be, is, as usual, loosely and indistinctly expressed. What is to be understood by *the means of subsistence*? Is it the amount of food actually produced each season? Or is it the whole of the subsistence, which man has the means of drawing from the soil, or both that actually drawn, and that which he could draw had he a demand for the whole? Again, whether are we to understand by the term *limited*, merely bounded, or regulated?

If by this conclusion be meant only, that there must be a sufficient quantity of subsistence to feed population, this sapient doctrine is a truism, which has only to be stated to be admitted. But if it be intended to affirm, as is probable, that the actual quantity of subsistence limits or regulates the actual amount of population, this can only be affirmed of certain states of population, such as the hunter's state, before man becomes a cultivator, or the state of a nation, which is labouring under actual

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, B. ii. ch. 13. p. 216.

famine, or of the actual population of earth, should it reach a pitch, beyond which she cannot feed any addition. This last, by the way, may be considered as a state of universal and constant famine, and would be a state somewhat similar to that in which the subsistence theory supposes man always to be. But with respect to those regions in which man is a cultivator, and which have not reached their complement, and with some slight exceptions, this includes all the districts of earth, the deduction is false. Population is no more limited by the means of subsistence, than by the means of clothing and of lodging. Indeed, the conclusion reverses the result of nature, and puts the effect for the cause. In all those countries the increase of subsistence is necessarily limited by the increase of population. The regulating power is in the hands of the latter. It is guided by the demand; that demand consists of the wants of population. And the regulation is, upon the whole, as complete as the human will, aided or counteracted by the various circumstances, amid which it has to operate, can make it.

The facts of all countries, when impartially considered, and stript of all theoretical dress, join to prove that there is a perpetual tendency to an average adjustment of subsistence to the demand. There is occasionally



rather a superabundance, and occasionally rather a deficiency in the supply of subsistence, as in the supply of housing and clothing; but there is on the whole, as accurate an adjustment of the supply of food, as in these other two leading articles. Indeed, when we consider the immense number of circulators labouring in the production of it, and often with very different views, and upon how many contingencies the quantity of the supply depends, the accuracy of this supply appears wonderful. Nothing could affect it but the regularity of the demand.

No proof whatever on the other hand has been afforded of an universal tendency on the average to a limitation from a deficiency or scarcity of the means of subsistence. It was indispensably necessary to prove this, or nothing was gained in support of the subsistence theory. Far from this, the reverse is incontestably true. As has been already observed, no country or district of any extent but contained additional sources of subsistence: none were peopled even to near the extent to which they possess these. If there were any limitation from any average scarcity of actual subsistence, why were more of the uncultivated lands, which were in all cases in such abundance, not put in a state of cultivation? There were hands enough to do this necessary work, and the demand would have fully repaid them. But these

abundant resources were left untouched. There was, therefore, no limitation derived from the means of subsistence.

This fact, I have to repeat, is decisive against all limiting power actually existing in subsistence. And the deduction is clear, that, there is nothing controlling or paramount in subsistence which takes the regulating power out of the hands of the cultivator more than there is in any other article, the supply of which is dependent on the will.

*"2d. Population invariably increases, when the means of subsistence increase, unless prevented by powerful and obvious checks."*

And so it increases when lodging or clothing increases. This likewise, in one sense, at least to a certain extent, is a mere truism. The greater the number of mouths, the greater the quantity of food will they consume; and, of course, the greater will be the quantity prepared for them. The conclusion, in this sense, amounts to nothing in favour of the subsistence theory. For how does it follow from this fact, that the increase of the subsistence is the cause, and not the effect, of the increase of population, more than from the corresponding increase of housing and clothing, that they are the cause of its increase?

Mr. Malthus has added an explanatory note; but this, instead of throwing light or certainty

over his meaning, makes it more dark and doubtful, and renders additional explanation still more necessary. "By an increase in the means of subsistence, as the expression is used here, is always meant such an increase as the mass of the population can command; otherwise it can be of no avail in encouraging an increase of people \*."

This explanation, in one sense, seems to fall in with the doctrine maintained by Mr. Gray, which, by the way, is a coincidence produced by more than one of Mr. Malthus's explanations and limitations. If by the words "such an increase in the means of subsistence as the mass of population can command," be meant something equivalent to an increase of employment among circulators, at such a fair price as will enable a married pair to feed a family rather better, in other words, *an increase not of subsistence itself, but of the means of purchasing it, that is, income*†, such a circumstance, as far as it goes, has unquestionably an influence in promoting marriage. This is, in fact, a part of the doctrine of Mr. Gray. He, however, includes the whole of housekeeping in his view: and to confine this influence to food alone, is incorrect. This article, accord-

\* Essay, vol. ii. B. ii. ch. 13. p. 216.

† The influence which the increase of population has on augmenting income, is minutely analysed in Book iv.

ing to the Happiness of States\*, forms only about 30 per cent in housekeeping among the great mass of Britons, in their present circumstances; but it may reach forty or fifty among the lower classes. It will, therefore, have an influence among these in that proportion. It is the whole of housekeeping, which those pairs, who think at all thus prudently, take into consideration.

But, though what Mr. Gray affirms be true, that abundance of employment at a fair price promotes early marriage, mere abundance of subsistence by no means uniformly operates so favourably. When accompanied with a fall of price, and a consequent diminution of employment, it has a strong contrary influence. Of this we had a proof too severely felt home in the year 1815, when the unusual abundance, by lowering the price of subsistence, and, of course, lessening the profits of the farmer and his means of giving employment, as well as the wages of his people, had perhaps as unfavourable an influence against marriage, as the scarcity of 1801.

Besides, though the increase in profitable employment, or the means of housekeeping, tends to promote marriage, yet the produce of that marriage depends upon the healthiness of

employment and of climate, on constitutional temperament, a greater or less degree of luxury, and so forth. If this were what is meant by the limitation "unless prevented by powerful and obvious checks," it would be correct, but they are stated to be "moral restraint, vice, and misery." In this description there is more theoretical arrangement than fact, and more technical nicety than either real distinctness or accuracy.

But in certain cases, the means of subsistence may be increased, and yet population decrease. Indeed, this uniformly happens when population does go back. The means of subsistence are the same, but the population is more or less reduced. If we examine those highly peopled districts of ancient times now in the unfortunate state of a diminished population, or the remains, or the mere site of those populous towns, which have either sunk to a very inferior amount of people, or have disappeared altogether, we find *the means of subsistence* as abundant as perhaps ever they were, and yet the actual population is reduced in some places to the one tenth of what it was formerly. Population in a few years could make these means as actually productive again, as formerly. And yet population has no tendency whatever from this circumstance to rise to the former amount. Indeed, probably in most in-

stances, amid their present circumstances, there is no tendency to increase whatever.

3. "*These checks and the checks which keep the population down to the level of subsistence are moral restraint, vice, and misery.*"

This is mere theoretical imagination and technicality. The principle which it implies, as has been fully shown, is not merely not proved, but is contrary to the principle actually operating in nature. *Subsistence has no level of its own.* Its amount depends entirely upon the amount of population. And population is constantly employed in raising the former amount to the amount of its wants or of the demand: that is, in raising subsistence to its own level. In the attempt to accomplish this great object, with some occasional and local exceptions arising from actual famine, caused by circumstances which it has not the skill or means of controlling, it is uniformly successful.

Thus the general conclusions which Mr. Malthus draws from his statistical survey of the world, are either incorrect, or do not at all prove the regulating power of subsistence. If it were necessary, it could be shown that his particular details in many cases are far from being secure against animadversion; but it is sufficient, in the present discussion, to have refuted his general conclusions.

He has completely failed in establishing an

universal deficiency of subsistence, or actual limitation created by it. Nor has he either shown how such a deficiency can possibly exist under the regulating power of the demand, or the manner in which it operates to regulate the amount of population.

In the following preliminary passage, he has put a case by way of illustration. "We will suppose the means of subsistence in any country just equal to the easy support of its inhabitants. The constant effort towards population, which is found to act even in the most vicious societies, increases the number of people before the means of subsistence are increased. The food, therefore, which before supported eleven millions, must now be divided among eleven millions and a half. The poor consequently must live much worse, and many of them be reduced to severe distress \*."

This is, as usual, a very loose statement of a case very unlike any thing in real life. How has this half million in eleven got the start of subsistence except in circumstances of actual famine? "A large additional quantity of population," says Mr. Gray, "is not brought into existence in a day. Even when the rate of increase is the most rapid, it keeps gradually advancing, and allows time for the cultivator by greater exertions, either in extending the width of cultivation, by taking in new lands, or

\* Essay, vol. i. B. i. ch. 2. p. 27.



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fertilizing more effectively the old, to supply its increasing wants \*."

This is evidently the uniform fact, always excluding famine: and famine, by the way, would soon have destroyed the half million, and reduced the population to the subsistence. How could population in its increase so far outstrip the increase of the supply of subsistence, in any country, while there existed additional means of supply, either in its own territory, or in others with which it was connected? There is, on the whole, always an advance in the supply of a year or two beyond the actual demand of population. "The latter is, for the most part, on an average of all the districts connected nationally or commercially, somewhere between a year and a quarter and two years before the former. But, on that average, subsistence seems seldom to reach above a year beyond population: and perhaps never, since the improved system of agriculture was introduced into Europe and that part of America which speaks the British language, has it fallen back, nearer to population, than a quarter of a year's advance, in this range of districts †."

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 437. See what follows with respect to the rate of doubling even in fifteen years, the highest possible in extensive masses of population.

† Id. B. vi. ch. 2. p. 433.





Out of this advance, therefore, any increase of population during the season can draw its subsistence. The palpable increase in the demand would operate upon the farmer and importer to supply more liberally. And this we know is the general fact.

On quitting this branch of the discussion I have to observe, that had Mr. Malthus, or any other writer, chosen to maintain, that population was regulated by, or kept down to the level of clothing, of lodging, or any other species of circuland, he might have made the same tour, and found the same result in all countries and districts of countries, with respect to clothes, houses, or the rest, as with respect to subsistence, or the amount of these agreeing with the amount of population: and for the same reason. All depend alike on the human will, and the adjustment of population. These supplies are all found, on the average, nearly equal to the amount of the demand: occasionally a little higher or a little lower than this; but on the whole as accurately adjusted to it, as is practicable. Indeed the subsistence theorist has only to substitute housing or clothing for the limitation, and he will find the argument equally good, and conclusive.

## CHAPTER III.

THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO AN AVERAGE EQUALITY BETWEEN THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF THE SUPPLY OF SUBSISTENCE AND THE ACTUAL DEMAND OF POPULATION.

So much has been deduced of late from the uniform tendency towards an average equality between the supply of subsistence and the demand of population, that it will be useful to examine with attention what really arises out of it.

If a statistician well acquainted with the real principles of circulation, but who had not directed his attention particularly to the subject of subsistence as connected with population, had been asked what would be his opinion *à priori* as to the state of the supply of subsistence compared with the amount of population, he would have replied at once, that *the supply on an average of years would naturally be as near the actual demand of population, as the cultivators could make it.* "Self-interest will prompt a number of persons sufficient, at least, to supply the demand for any species of article, to join the class which labours at it; and when this class becomes too numerous, or when its hands pro-

duce more of the article than can be disposed of, the same self-interest will urge them to leave the class, or to produce less\*." The demand thus regulates the number of suppliers and the amount of the supply, as far as this is dependent upon the will. And facts uniformly show, that this is the case with respect to subsistence.

There is nothing peculiar in this equality between the supply and the demand in the case of subsistence. The same equilibrium between the supply and the demand is found in all other divisions of circutland, as of houses, clothes, government, teaching, amusement, physic and service: and for the same reasons. No one thinks of attributing a limiting or regulating power to houses or clothes, for example, on account of this equality. Why then should this limiting power be imagined to exist in the supply of subsistence?

"But it has been urged," says Mr. Gray, "*the equilibrium maintained between subsistence and population, shows that the quantity of the former regulates the amount of the latter.*" There is as much force in this, as if it were argued from the equilibrium between the quantity of corduroy made at Manchester, and of muslin made at Glasgow, and the number of those who

\* Happiness of States, B. II. ch. 3, p. 79.

use these articles, that the quantity of corduroy and muslin regulated the existence of the number of their users: or, that the quantity of shoes made in Great Britain, from its corresponding with the amount of its population, regulated the number of Britons born, marrying and dying, and not the latter number the quantity of shoes made. There is a similar equilibrium between the hats manufactured by the hat-maker, and the heads that wear them, as between the eatables produced by the cultivator, and the mouths that eat them. But is it the number of hats that regulates the number of heads, or the number of heads the hats? This equilibrium between subsistence and population is, as has been already noticed, and will be shown presently more in detail, a decisive proof, that the latter regulates the former. It shows, that the quantity of subsistence is measured and produced by the will of man, governed by his own interest: and that, on an average of seasons good and bad, if there were a greater demand for subsistence, the cultivator would produce more, and, if the demand diminished, so, at length, would the production of corn and cattle, as in the case of shoes and other articles used by man\*."

What seems to have led to an idea of a

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 486.

limiting power in the supply of subsistence, is the absolute necessity of a sufficient supply of this article. Houses and clothes are in certain districts, or at certain seasons, almost absolutely necessary, though not strictly so. But subsistence is strictly necessary. Without a certain quantity of food, population could not exist at all.

This natural absolute necessity, however, gives it no limiting or regulating power, except in such cases as where it is actually brought into action; as in famines. In all other cases the will of population deprives it of this limiting power by the regulating influence which it possesses over the supply. Thus the supply of food is a mere matter of arrangement, as the supply of clothes, houses, amusement, and so forth.

The indistinct manner, in which the equality has been stated, has also contributed to erroneous views on the subject. The expression *means of subsistence*, used by Mr. Malthus and other writers, is indistinct, vague and improper. In its full sense it points out the whole of the resources of subsistence either actually drawn upon by the cultivator, hunter and fisher, or which the earth would possess if they drew to the utmost in the power of all these respectively: that is, the whole of the productive powers, which she either possessed of her-

self, or which could be given to her by the skill and labour of the cultivator, till she could not be made to feed one human being more. In this sense, therefore, it is a mere truism to say, that population is limited by the means of subsistence. But the limiting power possessed by it under this view will never be brought into full action, until population can by its will create no farther supply.

The expression, therefore, is improper, or, at least, vague and indistinct, when applied to any other state of population, and should be avoided. In discussing the question, to which, population or subsistence, the regulating power belongs, we should speak of the supply of subsistence, as of clothes, and houses: or *the average actual amount of the supply compared with the actual amount of the population drawing upon it.*

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## CHAPTER IV.

POPULATION HAS THE POWER FULLY TO REGULATE THE AMOUNT OF SUBSISTENCE, TILL THE EARTH HAS REACHED ITS FULL COMPLEMENT.

THERE is evidently a restriction in the regulating power of the demand over the supply.

This power can extend only to what is practicable. Mr. Gray expresses this by the limitation, *as far as dependent on the will of man, or the cultivator.*

Is there any thing then in the supply of subsistence, connected with the increase of population, which deprives the will of man of its regulating power?

It has been calculated by Mr. Gray, as the result of a minute analysis\*, that two acres cultivated to such a pitch of fertility as to produce four quarters of wheat each, or what is equivalent to that†, are necessary, on the average, to maintain an individual, according to the luxurious allowance required by population, when it has nearly reached its complement. The average quantity required by a country thinner peopled, and, therefore, poorer and less luxurious, will not be so large; but then, on the other hand, it is only in so high a state of population that land can be in general cultivated to such a pitch. The one deficiency will balance the other. If we assume this to be the requisite quantity of cultivated land per individual, then for every unit added to popu-

\* Happiness of States, B. v. ch. 7. p. 420.

† This is certainly a high average: and Mr. Gray, after having seen more of the Continent, expresses himself with less confidence as to the practicability of such an universal average, even for the temperate regions.

lation, there must be two well-cultivated acres added to the extent already cultivated for the supply of subsistence, or a larger quantity in proportion as the cultivation is inferior. Of course, every such addition will bring the cultivable portion of earth two acres nearer to its being completely stocked.

It has been shown by Mr. Gray\*, that population has fully in its power to supply itself with a sufficiency of subsistence, whatever be its rate of increase. I shall content myself here with quoting the following passage only.

“Population, whatever be the ratio of its increase, carries in itself the means of finding sufficient food. Its increase supplies it with an additional number of hands. Only about one out of six or seven of the new persons on the average of life, as with respect to the old, is wanted to cultivate, in order to feed himself and the rest. The other five or six become effective members of the community in other modes of employment, and while they increase the consumption, tend to increase the supply also. An increase of population not only increases the demand for subsistence, and consequently, for an additional number of cultivators, but by rendering the number of those who wish to be farmers, greater, urges them to attempt

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3, &c.



cultivating lands, which in a stagnant or decreasing state of population, they would never have thought of doing. This increase also, by augmenting capital, skill and manure, enables the old and the new cultivators to produce additional supplies adequate to the additional demand. And thus an increase of population regularly forces up the quantity of subsistence at least to a level with itself, but in most cases higher \*."

"Until, therefore, the earth is peopled to the highest amount which it is capable of feeding, or while there is any uncultivated, or imperfectly cultivated soil, population has the regulating power over subsistence in its own hands. *As far as depends on subsistence, it may increase at any rate, however rapid.* It has only to apply more of its members to the work of cultivation, and it can obtain what it wants.

In thinly peopled districts there is generally an abundant choice of uncultivated soil of various qualities: but in those which are thickly peopled, the uncultivated lands are of the more barren and obstinate kinds, as the better are first chosen †. If, however, the lands of the latter class be more difficult to cultivate, the population, from its greater wealth and capital as well as its consequent

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 439.

† Id. B. vi. ch. 8. p. 476.

higher improvement, and a more abundant regular supply of manure arising from these, is more capable of taking in and fertilizing waste and barren soil. It may be considered as an axiom in statistics, from subsistence being a strict necessary, that *if there be a real demand for the cultivation of more soil, the state of population must be such with respect to fresh lands, as long as there are any which can be cultivated, that they may be cultivated to profit.*

We have had a great deal of fancy sported on the subject of barren lands, but the real practical state of the case is, that it is a mere question of profit, whether to cultivate or not. The cultivator is always willing to cultivate, and he is always able to cultivate to his own advantage, such additional lands as are necessary to raise the requisite supply, unless subsistence can be procured at a cheaper rate, and with ease, from another country. If, therefore, this foreign supply cannot be obtained conveniently, and at a lower price, he will go on cultivating at home additionally up to the extent that is really required. However obstinate and unfavourably situated, when his land is below a certain height above the level of the sea, the return he will receive, will repay him for his exertions. Mr. Gray considered, even in 1814, fifteen pounds an acre "as the maximum of expense of cultivating waste lands (with the

exception of some very impracticable districts), and, perhaps, by far the greatest part for about the one half, after deducting, as is fair, the common expense of cultivating \*." And what sort of return would there be, which with wheat about 80 shillings, barley about 40, and oats about 27 per quarter, with the alternate crops of turnips, clover, and potatoes, that would not yield the improver or land-owner a profit of at least six or seven per cent. or a rent about 20 shillings per acre?

Judicious arrangements, economy and care are undoubtedly necessary. But with these how small a portion of lands below a certain height, is there that cannot be cultivated to profit, if the demands of an increasing population urge the cultivator†?

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 477.

† In the hilly boundary between Berwickshire and East Lothian, two of the best cultivated districts in Europe, there is a law or hill, about 1300 feet high, up which cultivation has been carried in some places, I think, to within a hundred yards of the top. As I rode through this wild district, accompanied by the farmer, an intelligent and active man, he pointed out a patch on the side of the hill, then in grass. "There," said he, "is the spot where I made my first money." This information from a practician, respecting land so unfavourable in every point of view, and in a county where there was so much fine land to come in competition with it, gave me great pleasure.

## CHAPTER V.

THE INFLUENCE OF POPULATION AND SUBSISTENCE  
ON EACH OTHER.

A MINUTE analysis of the influence of population and subsistence upon each other has been given by Mr. Gray \*. This has not been done on the other side, though such an analysis is indispensably necessary to enable us to come to a just conclusion.

When an unusual or extraordinary, not to say apparently unaccountable, influence is attributed to any cause, the public is entitled to expect a clear and minute analysis of the operation of this cause, and the modes by which it creates the influence. Mr. Malthus has by no means complied with this requisition in regard to the extraordinary influence which he ascribes to subsistence. He confines himself to general assertions respecting it; and the reader is left in the dark as to the exact means by which the regulating influence of subsistence achieves the supposed effect.

The inquiring statistician, however, before he gives his assent, must have a clear and dis-

\* Happiness of States, B. vi.

distinct answer to the questions, In what does the regulating influence attributed to subsistence consist? And how does it operate?

*Population increases according to the earliness of the prevailing plan of marriage, and the healthiness of the great mass of the people* \*. This may be considered as an axiom.

What influence subsistence has on population must, therefore, be by a tendency in it to regulate the period of marriage and the general state of health. If it be the regulator of the increase of population, it must be naturally possessed of the whole, or nearly the whole of the regulating power of marriage, health, and fecundation. Let us examine in what degree it possesses the regulating power in fact.

Sir James Steuart seems to have been the original author of the principle of the subsistence theory, or that *the quantity of the food regulates the quantity of population*, though he did not succeed in bringing this singular principle into public notice or discussion. He is more particular in his analysis than Mr. Malthus; but even his is very imperfect, and we gain nothing satisfactory from it.

"Were the earth therefore uncultivated," says he, "the numbers of mankind would not exceed the proportion of the spontaneous fruits

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 461.

which she offers for their immediate use, or for that of the animals which might be the proper nourishment of man\*."

Here man is considered in the mere animal state. And in this state the result is admitted by Mr. Gray†.

Again, with respect to this animal state Sir James says, "Put two or three pairs of rabbits into a field proper for them, the multiplication will be rapid; and in a few years the warren will be stocked: you may take yearly from it a hundred pairs, I shall suppose, and keep your warren in good order. Give over taking any for some years, you will perhaps find your original stock rather diminished than increased for the reasons above mentioned. Africa yearly furnishes many thousands for the cultivation of America; in this she resembles the warren. I have little doubt but that if all her sons were returned to her at once, by far the greater part would die of hunger‡."

I shall admit that, on the whole, the supposed would be the real results with respect to the rabbits; but when he brings in the negroes, there is something farther of essential importance to be taken into consideration: unless

\* An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. B. i. ch. 3. p. 24.

† Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 434.

‡ Political Economy, vol. i. B. i. ch. 3. p. 26.

we suppose the negroes to be utterly unpossessed of the reasoning faculty, and utterly unacquainted with cultivation. On this supposition, they are to all intents mere animals, or as rabbits, horses, or what you please. But if they enjoy the reasoning faculty, as we know they do, they enjoy what no other animal but man does possess; and this is the very regulating faculty. If they are also acquainted with the practices of cultivation, and we know they are from their employments in America and the West Indies, they can exert their regulating power effectively.

In a country so ill cultivated as that of Africa, it would indeed be extremely difficult to find the additional food, required by so vast and sudden an influx of additional mouths. Unless, therefore, the subsistence which was raised *expressly for them* in the districts in which they lately resided were sent after them, the direct influence of famine would operate upon them. In the districts which they had left, there would be an excess of food, and in the districts into which they had come, there would be a corresponding deficiency. This result, therefore, does not affect the real question at issue.

Mr. Gray has noticed a similar case. "But suppose two or three hundred thousand persons were suddenly to come into a country in addi-

tion to its common population: would not the quantity of food, though fully equal to the consumption before, now become dangerously scanty, and produce a powerful effect on the general population? But where is this numerous body of immigrants to come from? Men do not drop from the clouds, or spring, like mushrooms, from the ground. They must come from one country or another, and unless they have been driven from it by absolute famine, they have left behind them a quantity of subsistence similar to what they will need in their new residence. But the case is extraordinary. And nothing can be deduced from it as to the general influence of subsistence on population\*."

These cases are indeed quite irrelevant in the present question, and have no influence at all in determining it.

Sir James proceeds from men as mere animals to men as rational beings. And here he treats the subject as unsatisfactorily as possible. Like the rest of the supporters of the subsistence theory, he never goes directly into a consideration of the real questions at issue, whether reason is not as sufficient to regulate the quantity of subsistence, as of clothes and houses; and whether it does not effect this completely in fact.

I shall first notice what he says of man in

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 459.



the former state: "There is, therefore, a certain number of mankind which the earth would be able to maintain without any labour: allow me to call this quantity A. Does it not, from this exposition of the matter, appear plain, that without labour A never can increase any more than animals which do not work for themselves, can increase beyond the proportion of food provided for them by nature \*?"

Granted. But man, by means of his faculty of reason, *with labour*, can do what mere animals cannot do. He can increase the quantity of subsistence according to any ratio, and to any amount which an increase of his numbers renders necessary, as long as there is any soil not cultivated, or not sufficiently cultivated.

He adds, "Having resolved one question with regard to multiplication, and shown that numbers must become greater or smaller, according to the productions of nature—†"

Indeed! How? He has not shown any such thing, or if he has, it is only with respect to men in a state of mere animal nature: and even this he has rather assumed than proved.

"I now suppose man," says he, "to add his labour and industry to the natural activity of the soil: so far, as by this he produces an

\* Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. B. i. ch. 3. p. 24.

† Id. Ib.

additional quantity of food, so far he lays a foundation for the maintenance of an additional number. This number I shall call B. From this I conclude, that as A is supposed to be in a constant proportion to the spontaneous fruits, so B must be in proportion to agriculture (by this term I understand at present every method of augmenting food by labour); consequently the number maintained by the labour of mankind must be to the whole number of mankind, as B is to  $A + B$ , or as B is to A and B jointly \*."

There is nothing gained by this on the side of the subsistence theory. Indeed it leads directly to Mr. Gray's, that man "can lay the foundation for the maintaining any additional number by producing any additional quantity of food."

10 After several remarks, in his inconclusive wretched manner, and which tend to prove neither one thing nor another definitely, he comes to this conclusion. "From what has been said we may conclude, that the numbers of mankind must depend upon the quantity of food produced by the earth for their nourishment;—" No conclusion of the sort follows from the premises. For, though men subsist on food, how does this fact show or prove that the

\* Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. B. 3. ch. 4. p. 87.

reason of man cannot or does not apportion the quantity of food to the mouths? "From which," proceeds he, "as a corollary, may be drawn, that mankind have been, as to numbers, and must ever be in proportion to the food produced; and that the food produced will be in the compound proportion of the fertility of the climate and the industry of the inhabitants\*."

In the first conclusion I have only here to observe, as it has been already amply demonstrated, he commits the radical error which has been either adopted from him, or committed after him, by Mr. Malthus, of reversing the law of nature, and substituting the effect for the cause. For according to her arrangements the food produced by men in a cultivating state ever has been and ever must be, on the average, in proportion to the numbers of mouths. Indeed the second conclusion leads to this, and rather unsays what had been said in the first. According to the former the quantity of food depends upon the industry, that is, the skill and labour of the cultivator. Their will, of course, must have an essential regulating influence.

Again he says, "These principles seem to be confirmed by experience; whether we con-

\* Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. B. I. ch. 3. p. 21.

pare them with the manner of living among the free American savages, or among the free, industrious, and laborious Europeans. We find the productions of all countries, generally speaking, in proportion to the number of their inhabitants; and on the other hand, the inhabitants are most commonly in proportion to the food.\* He adds, "I beg this may not be looked upon as a quibble, or what is called a vicious circle." And by what sober statistician will it not? As much would be gained by saying, subsistence is equal to population; and, therefore, population is equal to subsistence.

Mr. Malthus asserts the subsistence principle in much more decisive terms, but he has not analyzed the mode by which subsistence puts in operation the complete regulating power which he attributes to it. He content himself, to general observations, and is not more satisfactory in the proof of the real existence of this regulating influence, than his predecessor. It would be only to re-examine what has been already examined, to go again into those general observations. He states what he calls the ultimate check to be a want of food, arising necessarily from the different ratio according to which population and food

\* Principles of Political Economy, vol. II. B. 4. ch. 5. p. 39.

increase. These different ratios we have seen to be mere visionary suppositions, that have no existence in real life. And where is there an appearance of this universal want, or deficiency of food? Only in the fancies of our subsistence theorists. The cultivator smiles at such a chimerical idea, and his average prices tell him that it is utterly untrue. Mr. Malthus indeed adds, "but this ultimate check is never the immediate check, except in cases of actual famine." This is certainly a most accommodating universal check, which only in some instances acts directly. Such a definition looks very like making it almost an universal and omnipotent cause, and at the same time no cause at all.

He tells us next, that the immediate check; as he calls it, "may be stated to consist in all those customs, and all those diseases, which seem to be generated by a scarcity of the means of subsistence."

The existence of customs actually derived from a scarcity of mere subsistence, in any considerable extent, among nations that have reached the state of cultivators, is very equivocal. He probably alludes to the custom of exposing infants and old people. Such practices may arise among savages from a deficiency of food; but I conceive, that, except in cases of actual famine, they are never had recourse to among

nations at all populous from that cause. Indeed the extent to which they are adopted in any nation, even exaggerated though it be, is very trifling. They are the result of individual criminality, not of national choice. The whole proves nothing. Even in Britain such aberrations, at least with respect to infants, frequently occur; but where is the deficiency of food in our island? Of late we have had many aberrations of an opposite kind: instances of stealing children. The argument of our subsistence theorists would deduce from these, that the crime springs from a superabundance of food. But, in truth, the practice of stealing children no more proves an excess of subsistence, than that of exposing them proves a deficiency.

Some of these occasional cases may indeed arise from a scarcity of food experienced by certain unfortunate persons and families; but do they spring from a real deficiency of subsistence in the country and its connexions? Certainly not, but from a deficiency of income. Had these persons possessed the means of purchasing subsistence, they, like others, would have found abundance of it forthcoming. Their case, therefore, resolves into that of poverty, which will be afterwards distinctly considered.

With respect, again, to *diseases* generated by the scarcity of subsistence, as I shall have

occasion to go more minutely into the subject, I shall at present only observe, that this idea of the subsistence theory seems to be, like most of the others, in direct contradiction to facts. We uniformly find, that in proportion as a country becomes more populous, it is not only better able to adjust the supply accurately to the demand, *but consumes a greater average quantity of subsistence*; the diseases caused by an excess of eating become more common, and those caused by a deficiency more rare.

Mr. Malthus also notices a tendency to check population, arising out of a deficiency of subsistence, through the medium of overstocking as to employment and creating poverty. These effects will be treated of distinctly in the third and fourth Books.

Mr. Gray has devoted an entire book to analyzing the mutual effects of population and subsistence upon each other. And the following are the deductions. "From the analysis of circumstances, the fact in nature is clearly established; *that population regulates subsistence, not subsistence population: that the progress of subsistence, with the exception of occasional irregularities, is caused by the progress of population, and by the skill and industry of that population: in other words, that it is the ratio of the increase of population, rapid or slow, which regulates the ratio of the increase of subsistence,*

To suppose the reverse, with the antipopulationists, is completely to misconceive things. It is to make the effect regulate the cause, not the cause the effect. An increase of population is the cause: the increase of subsistence, the effect produced by that cause. Population will force subsistence on at a rate, at least equal, but generally higher than its own: but subsistence, if, owing to certain circumstances, it usually exceeds the common ratio of the population, will gradually sink to the latter\*.

Again, with respect to subsistence: "In sum, to recapitulate, subsistence can operate on the progress of population only by rendering marriage earlier or later, or by making it more or less productive. But its influence in quickening or retarding marriage is merely accidental or local, like that of other species of circulated, when its price is higher or lower than usual, compared with the price of labour. In other cases it has no particular influence on marriage at all. And so far from greater abundance tending, on an average, to render marriage more productive, it has, on the whole, a contrary or a defecundating and antipopulating effect. If we suppose a bare sufficiency of necessaries, the more scantily fed families

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 445.



classes and districts are, on an average, both more prolific and longer lived \*."

I cannot here help repeating, that it seems very extraordinary, that the authors of the subsistence theory, in treating of the mutual influence of population and subsistence on each other, should not have gone distinctly into the question, Is not population the regulator of subsistence, as of all other articles depending on the will; and if not, why?

I shall now state generally the effects of the influence of population and subsistence on each other, as found in actual nature, in order to ascertain which of the theories corresponds with these.

Population increases more rapidly, *cæteris paribus*, the earlier the general plan of marrying is in a district. What influence then has subsistence in promoting early marriage?

It is not the mere abundance of subsistence which promotes marriage among the lower ranks. Sometimes this very abundance will operate against marriage; as when it reduces the rate of wages, and diminishes the quantum of employment. In such a case it disinclines young people to venture the expenses of keeping house. Of this we had an impressive example in 1815, and the first half of 1816 †.

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 5. p. 462.

† This latter year was singular and memorable in

It is, therefore, by the rate of price, that food has an influence in quickening or retarding marriage. And, in this point, it has no influence whatever different from that which clothes, housing, education, &c. possess. What difference exists is merely in degree. For it is the total expense of housekeeping, compared with wages, that has an influence upon the prudent of both sexes. It is true, that food forms so principal an item of the expenses of the lowest ranks, that it has probably a predominant influence with them. But it is always viewed by those who think at all in the case, with a reference to income. It is, therefore, not so much the price of food, clothing, &c. as

many points; and among others, for its operation on population from the contrary impulses to which it gave rise. It was the first year of peace; and the return to peace usually creates a strong incitement to marriage. (Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 2. p. 300.) That effect, however, was opposed by the unfavourable influence of a great deficiency of employment caused by the cessation of the war business, as well as by the low price of subsistence. The latter reduced a great number of the farmers to distress, and many to bankruptcy, and through the farmer, distressed also the land-owner, the clergyman and others. By forcing, again, the great body of the middle and lower ranks to live more frugally, it had a tendency to fecundate, or to render marriage more prolific. On the other hand, that was probably more than fully counteracted by the general gloom among those ranks, produced by distress, as well as by the peculiar ungeniality of this wet and wintry year. r.

the rate of income, or the certainty of employment and its lucrativeness, which determine the thinking couples to hasten or postpone the connubial connexion.

“ But has not a great abundance of subsistence, as in an uncommonly plentiful year, an effect on marriage, and consequently on population? This occasional effect it certainly has, as has been already noticed, but in no other way, than the occasional cheapness of other articles in general use, to the amount which any of them forms in the general expenditure. Population increases according to the earliness of the prevailing plan of marriage, and the healthiness of the great mass of the people. If the price of the necessities of life should of a sudden fall, and labour should continue at the former rate, this will put the younger folks of the lower ranks more in the humour of marrying than they even usually are. But the price of the peculiar sorts of labour of those ranks, on which the mere price of necessities has any influence with respect to marrying, will always bear a permanent proportion to the permanent price of those necessities, whether they be high or low. These form, as I have conjectured, at least thirty per cent. in the amount of living, or the price of things. And, therefore, the average quantity of subsistence, in consequence of regulating the average price of labour, will

not urge them to marry more generally than their other circumstances permit or require. As for the middle and higher ranks, the price of necessaries has very little influence in either preventing or retarding marriage among them. They are governed by the circumstances in which they are with respect to employment, the style of living which their particular situation and their class require to keep up, the price of the education and clothing of their children, and the expenses of servants, and by their own feelings and opinions \*."

Subsistence has thus no peculiar, and seldom any material, influence in hastening or retarding marriage. What influence then has it upon health, and by means of health to render marriage prolific, and the offspring long-lived and productive in their turn?

According to Sir James Steuart and Mr. Malthus, subsistence has a fecundating power according to its abundance. Mr. Gray, on the other hand, maintains that in proportion as subsistence is consumed beyond a very frugal average, it has a defecundating effect, or a tendency to render marriage less productive.

Sir James compares the generative faculty to a "spring loaded with a weight, which always exerts itself in proportion to the dimi-

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 461.

nution of resistance: when food has remained some time without augmentation or diminution, generation will carry numbers as high as possible; if then food come to be diminished, the spring is overpowered; the force of it becomes less than nothing. Inhabitants will diminish, at least, in proportion to the overcharge. If, upon the other hand, food be increased, the spring which stood at 0, will begin to exert itself in proportion as the resistance diminishes; people will begin to be better fed; they will multiply, and in proportion as they increase in numbers, the food will become scarce again \*."

Mr. Malthus is highly pleased with this comparison of the generative faculty to a spring loaded with a variable weight †. I confess, the use of such comparisons and of metaphorical illustration, in questions which depend entirely on actual facts, seems to me very doubtful. It is, perhaps, more calculated to lead the student astray, than to give him a clear comprehension of the subject as it really is. Nor is the fact as Sir James has stated it.

He assumes, that because people are better fed, they will multiply faster. This is so far from being the truth, that the reverse, to a certain extent, is almost uniformly true. A

\* Political Economy, vol. i. B. i. ch. 3. p. 25.

† Essay on the Principle of Population, vol. i. B. i. ch. 2. p. 33.

superfluity of food has the same depopulating effect upon man, as it has upon irrational animals. "From universal experience," says Mr. Gray, "the fact in nature is, that *the increase of population is much in the inverse ratio of the quantity of subsistence used, to the point of a bare sufficiency of mere necessities.* The less a given number of people consume, on the average, the faster, on the average, they increase: and *vice versa*, the more any given number consume, they increase the slower\*."

Were it necessary here to go into a detail of particulars, that establish this doctrine†, we might quote every class, district and country around us. "Those districts in a country likewise, which may be called populating, are inhabited chiefly by the poor, who fare hardly. Their population overflows, and the surplus goes to supply the depopulating districts, which consist of the high-fed and wealthy." Cumberland, Westmorland, parts of Yorkshire, and other districts of England, that are poor and ill-fed, send off their surplus population to other parts which are rich and well-fed. The Highlands and other poor districts of Scotland overflow, and send off their superfluous people to the richer and more manufacturing districts

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 454.

† For this detail consult the 4th chapter of the 6th Book of the Happiness of States.

of the Lowlands, and of England. Indeed, it is generally true all over the globe, that the poor and ill-fed districts are the nurseries for the populous, rich and well-fed. The surplus of the former goes to supply the demand arising from the deficiency of the latter.

“The same thing holds true with respect to whole countries as with respect to districts. The new or back settlements of America, have doubled their population, we are told, in fifteen years. Now these new settlers, from the circumstance of their having a country to clear and bring into a state of cultivation, must be the worst fed in America, or live upon the merest necessities. The Scots and the Irish have, at an average, more children than the English, because not so high fed. The rate of the increase of population in Ireland is much more rapid, than in England, or even in Scotland: What is the reason of this? The mass of her population is not so well fed, as the mass of that of the former, or even as that of the lowlands of the latter. The great body of her people live almost entirely on potatoes. And yet, with this poor fare, her population is advancing at an astonishing rate\*.”

In sum, on comparing classes, towns, districts, countries, we find, that those which use

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4, p. 450.

the greatest quantity of food people slowest. According to the doctrine of the subsistence theorist, the luxurious maritime towns of America should people faster than the new settlements, in which the cultivators work so hard, have such keen appetites and fare frugally. London also should be augmenting her indigenous population at an amazing rate, while the districts of England, Scotland and Ireland that fare scantily should barely reproduce their numbers. But what is the fact?

The effects of scanty and luxurious living are seen verified in the history of most countries in their different periods. "This is one of the chief causes of old and populous states increasing slower in population, *ceteris paribus*, than those which are young and less populous. It is not that the average quantity of subsistence is less abundant in the former, but the reverse. A greater proportion of the old and populous states lives luxuriously, that is, uses a quantity of the various articles of subsistence beyond the moderate degree that is salubrious. The mass, therefore, is comparatively more unhealthy and less prolific \*."

Mr. Gray adds, "The predominant style of the employment in the two states tends to the same effect." The general fact throughout the

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 155.



poorer and richer classes of districts is, that the quantity of food consumed is somewhat in the inverse ratio of the quantity of exercise out of doors. *The greater the exercise, the more frugal the fare; and the more luxurious the eating, the less the exercise.* The former combination tends as much to health and proli-  
finess, as the latter to disease and sterility.

And yet our subsistence theorists tell us, that men increase faster according to the greater abundance of subsistence. This is indeed to make the rational animal depend more on food than the irrational tribes. It is well known, that, among these, high feeding is unfavourable to prolificness. Man is thus put not on the same footing with animals but with vegetables. For grain, turnips, cabbages, potatoes, are rendered more abundant from the greater quantity of artificial food supplied to them.

The other observation of Sir James, that "in proportion as men increase in numbers, the food will become scarce again," is equally untrue. It is uniformly found that *in proportion as a country is better peopled, its various classes feed more luxuriously.* They must, therefore, have more ample means of obtaining food. The more effective modes of labouring, the accumulation of capital, and the advancement in science, which are the uniform results of the increase of population, enable the cultivator

more completely to adjust the supply of subsistence to the demand. And it will be shown afterwards that this increase also necessarily augments employment and wealth, and consequently puts it in the power of a larger portion of all ranks to procure a greater quantity of the luxurious or less thrifty kinds of eatables and drinkables.

A deficiency and a superabundance of food have each an injurious influence on the health. The former is a much more rare case than the latter in the history of population, after man becomes a cultivator, that is, a regulator of the quantity and kind of subsistence used. In proportion as population increases, the injurious influence of deficiency grows less extensive, while that arising from superabundance becomes more general.

The influence of population and subsistence on each other is thus, in all its extent, against the subsistence theory of Sir James Stenart and Mr. Malthus, and in favour of the doctrine of Mr. Gray.

## CHAPTER VI.

HAS POPULATION A TENDENCY TO RISE ALWAYS FULLY, OR NEARLY, TO THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF THE MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE?

THE subsistence theory is principally built on the notion, that *population has an uniform tendency to rise fully or nearly to the average amount of the means of subsistence.* No such tendency, however, does exist in nature. This is proved by the actual fact, that to this day after the exertion of the influence of the populating causes for several thousand years, there are abundant additional means of subsistence even in the thickest peopled countries.

If the position be restricted to the quantity of subsistence *actually produced*; its force in favour of the subsistence theory is destroyed. For the decisive question then recurs, If population has never yet shown any *universal* or necessary tendency to rise fully or nearly to the means of subsistence in its power, how can the quantum of those means regulate the quantum of population?

Let us, however, restrict the position to the quantity of subsistence *actually produced*, though this be in effect to abandon the prin-

ciple. It is clear, that if the quantity of subsistence raised in a district or country, entirely, or even chiefly, regulate the amount of the population in that district or country, there will be, on the average, an uniform tendency in the latter to rise or fall back to the former. What then is the actual fact? Far from such an equilibrium being uniformly maintained in real life, we find in many countries and in most districts, that the reverse is the fact. Indeed, did such an equilibrium exist, there would be scarcely any exportation or importation of subsistence. Districts and countries would just feed themselves; and there would be little or no surplus on the one hand, and little or no deficiency on the other. Yet few articles can boast so much exporting and importing as subsistence, or display so much fluctuation in the annual amount.

Some districts and countries have for ages exported, and others for ages imported grain. The former, therefore, enjoyed a surplus, and the latter laboured under a deficiency. Among the countries possessing a constant superabundance, may be reckoned Poland, with some other large districts on the south side of the Baltic, Scotland, Ireland, the United States of America, &c. Among the latter England has occupied a permanent place for above half a century: and Spain, Portugal, France, Italy,

Holland, and indeed most of the states of Europe have either generally or occasionally been importers of subsistence, in one form or another, to a greater or less amount.

If then the quantum of subsistence, actually produced, entirely, or even chiefly, regulates the quantum of population, why has not the population of Poland and other exporting states or districts risen to the amount of subsistence? Or how has the population of Great Britain and other importing states continued to increase with a constant deficiency of native subsistence? With respect to England in particular, her population has increased much faster since her native subsistence became deficient, than ever it did, while she had a surplus. In proof of this I have only to refer to the history of her population and subsistence for the last twenty-five years, during which her population has increased with such unusual rapidity, while her deficiency of native subsistence has been so considerable as occasionally to spread a general alarm among all ranks of her people.

Let us next examine smaller districts, and we have the same truth uniformly confirmed in the clearest manner. We find that the quantum of native subsistence in these districts has no necessary or regulating connexion with the quantum of their population: for the quantum

of both is combined in all possible ratios. In one district population is increasing rapidly with a growing deficiency of native subsistence. In another, native subsistence has a vast and increasing surplus above the demands of the population. In a third the quantum is found to be fully equal, and so forth.

It is scarcely necessary to quote particular examples, when all might be quoted. I shall notice one or two merely for the sake of illustration.

The district of Berwickshire affords us an instructive proof of a surplus produce of subsistence having no necessary influence in forcing up the native population to its amount. This county is well known for its high attainments in agriculture. Indeed it may, in some respects, be considered as the original or central school of the improved or modern Scottish convertible system. It was in this county where old principles were first generally abandoned, and science and capital applied to agriculture on a grand scale. Without meaning to injure the claims of other counties, in their own lines, I may venture to affirm, that most of our improved districts have directly or indirectly profited by its illustrious example. The lucrative and advantageous results of capital, when directed by sound theory and correct practice, have been as fully verified here, with respect to

agriculture, as they have been in other districts with respect to other branches of husbandry. For half a century its produce has been regularly increasing. New lands have been continually taken into cultivation, and in a greater or less degree the old cultivated more effectively. For the last twenty years, it is probable, that its subsistence, in corn and cattle, &c. has been at least thrice the amount consumed by its people.

What then has been the fact with respect to its population?

Its climate is mild and healthy. It has no large towns: Dunee, the most populous, contains little more than 3000 inhabitants. It is almost entirely an agricultural district; for, with the exception of a manufactory of paper or two, it can scarcely be said to have any manufactures. Its people, therefore, are not only employed chiefly in the healthful exercises of agriculture, or those more necessarily connected with these, but they, of course, live less luxuriously than the inhabitants of manufacturing districts. And yet, with all these circumstances so favourable to population, during the ten years from 1801 to 1811, it stood nearly the lowest in Great Britain with respect to increase. Rutland, Orkney and Shetland only were lower; for, I believe, the cases of Banff and Nairn are doubtful. Its population rose

from 30,621 to 30,770, or 1 only in 194 during ten years\*.

Let us next notice the two counties, which if we except the metropolitan, Middlesex and Middleham, imported the greatest quantity of subsistence, in proportion to their population, *Northampton* and *Lancashire*. These counties, though they had the greatest deficiency of native subsistence, increased the most rapidly in point of population. The former was originally the first in point of increase of population in Great Britain, and the latter the fourth. Thus, while *Berwickshire*, with all its surplus produce, increased during ten years only 1 in 104, *Lancashire* increased, during the same period, 1 in 3½ and *Leicestershire* 1 in 4½.

The cause of this difference has evidently nothing to do with the quantum of subsistence. It is found in the quantum of employment.

Dr. Adam Smith has observed in a rather incorrect tone, that "the demand for man, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of man; quickens it when it goes on too slowly, and stops it when it advances too fast †." This is too generally

\* The celebrated agricultural county of *East Lothian* is in a similar state with respect to superfluous subsistence as *Berwickshire*; and yet the increase of its population in the same period, though not so slow, has been only 1 in 25½.

† *Wealth of Nations*, vol. i. B. i. ch. 8. p. 106.



expressed, though, with proper limitations and explanations, it may be admitted to be true. The demand for men, if we must express it in this formal theoretic manner, springs from an increase of employment, or circulant, or the means of circulation, and this increase again arises from the great source of all, the increase of population. A demand for circulators in a district tends to promote early marriage in it, as well as attracts adult circulators from other districts. Mr. Gray has expressed his idea on this subject somewhat more decorously as well as distinctly than Dr. Smith. After having shown that the increase of population necessarily increases circulant, or the materials of circulation or employment, he adds: "The effect of increasing circulant on population, again, is a tendency to increase it also. Holding out better prospects of providing for a family, it promotes early marriage: at the same time, it encourages immigration, by causing a greater demand for fresh hands to supply the new and additional wants. Thus in both ways it tends to quicken the rate of indigenous increase \*."

Let us now apply these observations to the districts which have been noticed, and we per-

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 44.

ceive at once the real cause of the extraordinary difference between them.

Agriculture is the chief medium of employment in Berwickshire. Now this will only afford business to the one fourth of population in the least improved districts, but the highly improved state of cultivation in that county renders only about one sixth necessary. A much larger proportion than that, indeed, is required to supply the demand of other districts for subsistence, yet still this additional demand is not sufficient to employ the number born in the county.

From the deficiency of employment marriage is not in general very early in it; yet the agricultural temperance in the style of living and the health arising from agricultural exercises render it productive, and its offspring healthy. There is, therefore, constantly a considerable number of superfluous hands produced, and these leave it to find employment where other branches of circuland are more extensively cultivated. Thus a deficiency of employment, and the emigration arising from it, render population stationary in a county, which produces such an immense surplus quantity of subsistence.

On the other hand Lanarkshire and Lancashire have such a vast quantity of employment, from their supplying other districts with

various articles of clothing, &c. that, though this promotes early marriage, the births are not sufficient to furnish a due supply of hands. These counties, therefore, not only retain almost all the native population, but attract immigrants from less employed districts. What subsistence it does not suit them to raise, they purchase from others that raise a superfluity, as others purchase from them the surplus clothing which they manufacture.

These facts demonstrate, that there is no necessary connexion between the actual quantum of subsistence raised in a district, and its actual population, according to the theory of Mr. Malthus; while they establish the theory of Mr. Gray. According to this author, the quantity of subsistence in a district has little or no regulating force. It is the effect, not the cause of population.

Whatever in a district creates an additional amount of employment, has a tendency to promote early marriage, as well as to retain the offspring on the spot. These circulators, of course, must obtain a sufficient quantity of food; and if it does not suit them to raise that themselves, they will purchase it from those, whose circumstances render it more suitable to apply a greater proportion of hands to raising subsistence and which have a surplus. But, if there were no surplus pro-  
3

able, the former would be obliged to set more hands to work at agriculture, and thus force their own soil to yield them what they want. The rise in the price of food, from the circumstances of the case, would both tempt and enable circulators to do this, till the soil of the given district could be made to produce no more.

On the other hand, were there no district deficient in subsistence, no district would continue to grow a larger amount than it could dispose of to its own population. For the cultivator, in such a case, could not sell his surplus produce, and if he continued to raise a superfluous quantity, he would at length be ruined\*.

Thus, on the whole, the quantity of subsistence annually raised under the regulation of the will of population, in a chain of districts connected nationally or commercially, will correspond as accurately as is practicable with the amount wanted by the total population of those districts†. More than the whole requires, instead of producing a stimulating effect on marriage, would have a contrary influence. It would tend to lower the profits, and consequently diminish the amount of employment. And less than the whole requires

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 3. p. 444.

† *Id.* B. vi. ch. 2. p. 432.

would be remedied as soon as possible by the stimulation created by necessity and the increased means arising from a higher price.

But the quantity of subsistence raised in certain districts or portions of the supposed chain, may differ very materially from that required by these portions. With respect to the lodging branch of circulant, the amount of this will in every district correspond very accurately with the amount of population. Circulators must find lodging on or near the spot where they generally are employed. But it is not at all necessary that either food or clothing should be raised or manufactured on or near the spot where the circulators reside. These can be purchased and brought from a distance, and sometimes to a greater advantage.

The circumstances of the population of a district, therefore, determine the quantity of subsistence raised in it, just as that of clothing. *It is the proportion which the circulators, who labour at cultivation, bears to the whole population of a given district, that regulates the quantity of subsistence produced in it; and it is the circumstances of these circulators, which regulate that proportion.* For example, it suits the circumstances of the United States of North America, and of Poland, to apply a larger portion of their hands to cultivation than is necessary to supply their own want. On the

other hand, it suits Great Britain and other states to apply a smaller proportion of hands than is necessary to supply a sufficient quantity. The latter find it more profitable and easy to purchase a certain portion of subsistence from the former, and to employ the additional hands that would be requisite to raise this portion in more lucrative branches of business.

## CHAPTER VII.

WILL POPULATION CONTINUE TO INCREASE TILL THE EARTH REACHES ITS FULL COMPLEMENT?

HAVING now ascertained, that in real life population regulates the quantity of subsistence, we come to a question of much interest: *Will it continue to increase till it is checked by a deficiency of subsistence?*

Whether this be answered in the affirmative or not, the regulating power of population cannot be affected. This power will be possessed by the human will till the earth reaches its full complement, if that period should ever arrive.

Mr. Malthus's notion respects the increase

of population at present, and at all times, and the evils arising out of it. This we have shown to be unwarranted. But Wallace, Condorcet and others, without recognising a present injurious influence of this kind in the increase of population, have speculated on what would befall the human race, were it to reach a number beyond which the earth could feed no more, and yet continue to increase. There is no occasion to have recourse to Utopian schemes, or to dream of states of perfect happiness arising from perfectly good governments, though, alas! by the way, the power which the very best possible government could possess to make the great mass of men moral and happy, is very limited indeed. This period will at length come, however wretched our governments may be, even according to the population theory, unless there be an essential change in the forces of the stimulating and counter-acting causes. We have seen, that with a great majority of very wretched governments, population, on the whole, has hitherto continued to increase. If then it be not checked by an entire new train of circumstances, or something in the nature of the increase of population itself, it must at length, though thousands of years may intervene (should the present system of things continue so long), reach a pitch beyond which the earth, with

all the assistance of men, cannot produce sufficient subsistence to feed it.

According to Mr. Gray, the increase of population does carry in itself the seeds of counteraction, which, he thinks it probable, will be ultimately powerful enough to check its progress entirely. The principle of counteraction he finds in the uniform tendency of the increase of population to increase wealth and enlarge towns, and consequently to promote luxury and modes of business injurious to health. The use of superfluous foods, indulgence in sedentary and effeminate habits, and unhealthful employments amid the impure air generated by narrow streets and crowded masses of population, tend strongly to debilitate, as well as to shorten life. They not only render marriage less productive, but the less numerous offspring more unhealthy. To the decrease of productiveness, and the increase of diseases, are also to be added the destructive effects of accidents both by sea and land, which seem to keep augmenting in proportion as population grows more crowded. Now all these influences must become more effective every year, as population draws nearer to its complement, at least, after it has passed a certain rate of thickness. The counteracting causes will grow constantly stronger, while the stimulating will grow rather weaker. The former,



therefore, may at length completely overpower the latter; and the result will then be, that population will become on the whole stationary, if not retrogressive.

“Not only all the regular but all the occasional depopulating causes,” says Mr. Gray, “have hitherto been overpowered by the regular populating ones, assisted by the occasional. The various states of society, existing over the extent of the globe, admitted this. Population has been able not only to oppose the effects of peace in one portion against those of war in another, and healthy climates and seasons against unhealthy; but, what is of such vast influence, new and vigorous colonizations against old states. And after balancing all, we find it has, on the whole, kept advancing. By some additional cause of increase in one district, it has gained more than it has lost in another. And so it would certainly continue to do, were the populating and depopulating causes to continue of a somewhat similar force. But in proportion as the earth becomes more generally well peopled, there must be a gradual failure of the populating and an increase of the depopulating forces: and whether the last may not, ere the world is fully peopled, overpower in their turn the former, is the question\*.”

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 7. p. 380.

Dr. Jarrold reckons the exertions of the mind to possess a counteracting influence. "As the faculties of the mind are unemployed," says he, "as the man sinks down towards the animal, he is prolific; as he ascends above them, his fruitfulness decreases\*." And certainly much thinking has both a defecundating and destructive effect. This, however, is only a part of a whole; and considered singly would have but a trifling influence in opposing the stimulating causes. It is enumerated by Mr. Gray among his counteracting circumstances. "It may be affirmed generally, that labouring with the body has a fecundating virtue, and labouring with the mind an influence of the opposite kind. Deep, abstruse and unpleasant thinking, indeed much thinking of any of the grave sorts seems to have a strong defecundating effect. Close study, care, anxiety, uneasiness, fear of poverty, distress arising from bankruptcy, the diminution of property, or from disappointments with respect to favourite projects, sorrow for the loss of relations or friends, remorse for crimes, habitual gloom of mind, or depression of spirits, despondence and despair, all tend to defecundate, or to render the human animal less prolific†."

Civilization, it is true, however, to a certain

\* Dissertations on Man, p. 250, 272, &c.

† Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 3. p. 309.

rate of population, has a populating influence. Man in the savage state, in which he is not very much elevated above the mere animal condition, is by no means prolific. But the civilizing influence of the increase of population gradually corrects the rude, defecundating and unhealthy habits of men up to the rate noticed. Beyond this rate civilization assumes a luxurious cast, and operates, in an advanced state of population, very strongly with sedentary habits and other circumstances to injure productiveness.

A statistical critic has hinted at this effect of civilization. He says, "Be it observed also, that there is an extreme point in the progress of civilization towards its highest stage, in which the population of a country *cannot* increase its numbers any further\*." But whether the critic entertains this opinion concerning civilization from the views arising out of Mr. Gray's theory, or from some other views of his own, does not appear, as he has neither quoted that author nor explained in what he conceives this counteracting influence to consist.

That the defecundating and unhealthy influence of luxury, sedentary habits and employment is very powerful in a crowded state

\* Quarterly Review, October 1816, p. 56. Review of Mr. Sumner's Prize Essay.

of population, and that it still continues to increase in proportion as the latter grows more crowded, cannot be disputed. In the best peopled states of the East, Hindostan and China, which have been in a high state of population for above two thousand years at least, the progress of population has been very slow, if not stationary, for ages. It is true, that in several European states population has continued to increase rapidly, in spite of a general use of superfluous food and luxurious habits and sedentary employments prevailing everywhere. But none of them have reached the half of their complement. And though our improved medical systems have done a great deal, the actual antipopulating effects of luxury and sedentousness of employment are displayed in their largest towns. Many of these, indeed, are rapidly increasing, but it is not from their indigenous population; it is from constant immigration from more healthy districts, produced by the temptation of more lucrative employment. It is extremely probable, that in all these towns above a certain size, and particularly if they are much employed in manufacture, the native population is decreasing. The increase of sterility among so many classes, on the one hand, and on the other, of the diseases of luxurious states, palsy, apoplexy, &c. but above all, of consumption, afford

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reason to conjecture, that, even with so many advantages in point of their climate, government, &c. the antipopulation causes may overpower the populating ere they have reached their full complement.

“To state a period,” says Mr. Gray, “for the equalizing of the populating and depopulating causes, must be mere conjecture. I should conceive, however, were universal population to reach such a crowded state, that the large-town population \* was equal to that of the country, it would scarcely be able to make any farther progress; if, indeed, it did not grow retrograde. In such a state, the country population itself, from its crowdedness, and the wealth and luxury flowing from this, as well as its connexion with the town population, would have lost much of its productive vigour. It would be barely able to keep up its own numbers; instead of supplying by its overplus, as at present, the destruction caused in towns. Where, then, is the depopulation of the large towns; which is felt even in the present lax state of population, and which must then be greatly increased to be supplied? There is no longer any room for new recruiting

\* “A population of about 5000 in a town may be taken as the commencement of the class of large towns, as that amount of a town mass begins to produce the usual effects of large town causes on population.” Ch. 6.

states; and if the loss cannot be supplied, population, of course, must annually decrease\*."

The rate of increase in the population of Britain, since the commencement of the French revolution war, the rapidity of which is probably unprecedented in her history, has been quoted by Mr. Gray in his second letter to M. Say, as the grand cause of her extraordinary increase in wealth during that period. "Allowing for the greater completeness of the enumeration of 1811," writes he, "I am inclined to think, that the population of Britain alone had increased between 1792 and 1815 full one fourth, or about 2,500,000 souls. In this prodigious increase of her circulators combined with the unprecedented increase of *really productive*, that is, *profitable* employment, we have the actual sources of the astonishing increase in her income, and capital, or her wealth, during these twenty-three years†."

This rapid increase has since been quoted by Mr. Malthus, against Mr. Weyland‡, to show that the enlargement of towns is not sufficient to check population. It is, however, to be considered that the population of Britain is considerably under half its complement. Scot-

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 7. p. 353.

† All Classes productive of national Wealth, p. 289.

‡ Essay. Appendix, vol. iii. p. 409.

land is not one fifth peopled, Wales only one fourth; and England has many agricultural districts, where the people fare frugally, and are very prolific. In 1811, the population of the island in towns containing 5000 souls and upwards was about 3,250,000, or only a little more than one fourth of the whole population\*. And there were only sixty-one towns in it containing above 10,000 souls. The vast increase of employment and wealth in England, had attracted an immense number of healthy immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and other countries, to the metropolis, and her manufacturing and trading towns. Britain, therefore, is no criterion of a state, which has nearly reached its complement, and is surrounded by nations that are fully as populous.

Some of the old peopled states of Asia are more likely to afford us examples of what may be expected from a mass of population, that has approached its practicable complement. China seems to be the most complete of all.

\* Mr. Malthus says the town population of England is to the country as 1 to 2 (vol. iii. Appendix, p. 410); but he has not stated at what number he commences his towns. Unless engaged generally in sedentary or otherwise unhealthy manufactures, the population of villages and even of small towns, perhaps up to the rate of 2000 souls, will be as healthy and prolific as the population of cottages, farm-houses and hamlets. (Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 366.)

It has been thickly peopled for at least two thousand years. The luxurious habits of a crowded population and their effects must necessarily have been accumulating. A vast number of its towns also must, during so long a period, have become very large; and, from the notices of those who have visited that singular country, imperfect and local as these are, we have reason to think that its towns are very numerous and unusually large. This country also suffers little from emigration, and it scarcely admits of immigration. What then is the state of this old and well-peopled country as to increase in its numbers? It has reached little more than three fourths of its natural complement according to the most extravagant statements, but it is more probable that it has barely reached the half; and yet its population is supposed to be stationary. At any rate its increase, if it be increasing, is very slow. Mr. Ellis saw marks of decay in some of its towns.\*

In many cases, up to a certain rate of town-population, the stimulating causes may be sufficiently strong, to overpower the counteractive, increasing in depopulating influence though these may be. But it by no means follows from this, that the latter may not at length acquire such force, as completely to check the former.

\* Journal of an Embassy to China, &c. p. 212, 200, 303, &c.



In comparing districts, in which the stimulating and counteracting causes are not very differently combined, we may mistake, but we cannot well be deceived as to districts in the extremes of difference. For example, is there any man who believes, that in the new and thinly peopled state of Kentucky the defecundating, and positively destroying circumstances approach near to the force which they have reached in the old and crowded county of Middlesex? What then must be the result, were it even granted, that the stimulating were as strong in the latter? Could the indigenous population of Middlesex double itself in the same period? Nay, but for the influence of healthy immigrants, could that population keep up its numbers?

What then is the cause of the slower increase of population, *cæteris paribus*, in older and more populous countries? Is it, as Mr. Malthus seems to imagine, because food is more scanty in the latter? Or is it, as Mr. Gray maintains, because it is consumed in a more excessive and luxurious degree by the great body, and because this body is engaged in less healthy pursuits? "It has been asked, Why does not an equal number produce an equal increase in Britain as in America? And it has been answered, The obvious reason to be assigned is a deficiency of food. This is to pay

an attention to theory and a disregard to facts with a vengeance. The real answer is just the reverse; or chiefly because the great mass of Britons eat more luxuriously or superfluously than the Americans. The average quantity of subsistence consumed, and therefore procured in Britain, is greater than that consumed in America, and particularly in those districts which multiply more rapidly. This superabundance of subsistence in Britain, joined to the less healthy exercises in which so large a portion of her population is employed, tends both to defecundate, and to injure life \*."

The latter is the real reason. The population of London, for example, consumes perhaps three or four times the quantity of superfluous food that is used by the new settlements of America; and yet its population, were it not for a constant supply of recruits from all parts of the empire, instead of doubling itself in twenty-five years, would go rapidly back.

For several centuries population has certainly accelerated the rate of its increase throughout Europe and that new-peopled division, America; but perhaps, it may be conjectured on good grounds, that its progress has been slow throughout Africa and that old and thick peopled division, Asia, if indeed,

upon the whole, it has not been stationary in these portions of the globe. The increase in the two former has evidently been much more rapid since the memorable era of the Reformation, and particularly during the last century. That great event in the history of the human race in Europe, which, it is probable, will ultimately affect the destinies of the whole race, was partly itself produced by the civilization necessarily arising out of the increase of population. The unusual stimulus created by the attainment of mental freedom, or *the right of private judgment*, which has produced so wonderful a change among the Protestant nations of Europe, and even through their example, among the Romish, by making men depend more on themselves and their own exertions, has contributed materially towards the rapidity of the increase. And should the whole world ultimately become Christian, this change, with its necessary consequences in favour of liberty and virtue, would certainly also operate with wonderful power in favour of population.

Nor is this event so improbable, as some seem to imagine. Nearly all Europe and America are already Christian. Part of Egypt and Abyssinia professes a nominal Christianity, such as it is; and the British establishments in Africa, particularly at the Cape of Good

Hope, will in time Christianize a considerable portion of that ill-peopled division of the globe. Australasia will be all Christian. The immense portion of Asia held by Russia, though as yet so thinly peopled, will be Christian also. And should certain not improbable events take place in Turkey \*, Christianity under the auspices of Britain and aided by British civilization will find it a less difficult task to extend her benevolent sway among the unreasoning bigots of the East, in whose minds mystic fancy and savage prejudices usurp too generally the place of sober sense and manly feeling.

Christianity is fitted to be the religion of the world; and of the world in the highest state of civilization. With the peculiar tenets of her sects I do not intermeddle. I leave those sects to adjust their peculiar creeds, each for itself, as well as they can. I speak of the doctrines held in common by all her sects: the grand catholic doctrines of men being all the sons of one God, all brethren, and all accountable to their divine Father. Such a religion is suited for being the religion equally of the philosopher and of the peasant: the religion of mankind.

It is alike favourable to the progress of reason and of liberty. The Christian spirit

and Christian morality are calculated to make men what they should be. Even the statistician, who may view Christianity merely as a system tending powerfully to promote the happiness of mankind, without any reference to authority, will ardently wish to see it universally adopted.

In these observations I may seem rather to have trespassed on the territory of the theologian. They arise, however, out of the subject; and in proportion as Christianity prevails; population, from the happy effects produced by the change, will certainly increase more generally and rapidly. But though with Christianity for an universal religion, its general rate will be accelerated, yet still the increase will carry in itself, a counteracting influence. The increase, from whatever cause arising, whether from ordinary circumstances, the spread of Christianity, or from the perfect governments, or yet the new arrangements which some enthusiasts dream of, must enlarge towns, augment wealth, and render sedentary employments more general. And the result must necessarily be an increase of defecundation and of disease.

If, however, the stimulating causes should be still found sufficient to overpower the counteracting, the earth must at length reach an amount of population, beyond which it cannot feed more. Mr. Gray throws out here a con-

jecture for certain speculatists. "As the commencement of the progress of population must have been the commencement of the present system of things, those who choose to indulge in such speculations, may imagine that this *ne plus ultra* of population will be the end of that system, when a new and happier order will take place, in which there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but all will be full-grown beings formed for immortality \*."

Were we to give way to such kind of speculations, it might be asked, since population had evidently a beginning †, why should it not have an end? And we have Christian authority for a period to the present system of things. The full complement, or that to which population naturally tends, seems a natural period for this close of the system.:

\* Id. B. iv. ch. 7. p. 354.

† From this fact Mr. Gray draws a new argument for the being of a God; and, if it be the real fact, and it seems to be incontestably so, the argument is decisive. "In tracing back a gradually increasing population," says he, "we must at length reach its commencement. There must then have been a time, when either this world did not exist, or no human beings on it. In either case, it is impossible to avoid the admission of a Being possessed of power and intelligence, capable of creating." *Happiness of States*, B. iv. ch. 6. p. 336.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE CASE OF THE EARTH'S REACHING HER FULL  
COMPLEMENT CONSIDERED.

Should the world at length reach its complement and the system continue, then, what Mr. Malthus groundlessly imagines to exist at present, will take place. Population will be checked by the amount of subsistence: for the will of man would be deprived of its regulating power. The natural law, therefore, of the demand regulating the supply will be overturned in this case. And unless recourse is had to some wise restraints, the consequences must be horrible: universal misery in all its worst forms.

To quiet our apprehensions of a state so dreadful, though placed at the distance of many thousand years at least, I have to observe, that by enacting a law, dictated by necessity, that *no man or woman should marry under the age of thirty*, all these miseries might be prevented. This measure alone, I conceive, would check population in any state of progress; and certainly, when it had reached such a pitch of general luxury, as its complement necessarily supposes. Indeed in this state of defecunda-

tion and diseases springing from immense towns, luxurious habits and sedentary employments, a much earlier period of marriage, *perhaps at twenty-five*, would render population at least stationary.

Such a measure, it is true, would certainly diminish the comforts of young people; but what would be the loss of these, when compared with the measures which it would prevent, and the happiness which it would consequently ensure? A conviction of the horrors, that would follow from an opposite practice, would make it be cheerfully and conscientiously complied with by the great mass. And to counterbalance the loss of matrimonial enjoyments, there would be the pleasures of longer courtship and those derived from looking forward to the period, when they might come together with safety to themselves, their offspring and the rest of the human race. It is not, however, meant to be affirmed, that morality in the intercourse of the sexes would not suffer an injury from this necessary measure.

The general wealth, created among all states by so high a rate of population, would render such a regulation much less hurtful than in a lower rate. The result of a constant short supply of subsistence compared with the demand, far from being, as Mr. Malthus imagines,



an increase of poverty, would be, according to the real principles of circulation, a vast augmentation of wealth\*.

Certain portions of a country, and even certain countries, may reach a rate of population beyond their complement by drawing recruits of people and supplies of subsistence from underpeopled districts and countries. This is consistent with facts already existing. But on the whole, I confess, the opinion of the author of the Happiness of States seems probable, that *the increase of population carries within itself a completely corrective influence against a general excess; and that consequently population will never universally reach its full complement.* The tendency, which nature has given to the defecundating and other counter-acting influences to increase, as population increases, seems to warrant this conjecture. Such a mode of preventing an excess tending to misery, is more agreeable to her usual modes. Upon her arrangements she delights to correct one tendency to excess by another. Youth, for one example out of many, has a natural tendency to extravagance, and this she corrects by giving to age a tendency to saving. The middle age is nearer the moderate degree than either.

But whether nature will herself ultimately

\* See B. iv. ch. 7.

correct the tendency in population to increase, so highly advantageous to its present rates, when it shall become injurious, or whether she will leave it to the wisdom of her children to correct this by positive restraints, will only be fully known after the lapse of a vast number of ages. Till then the question cannot be answered but upon probabilities.

To recapitulate generally: It is clear, that *the regulating power is as completely in the possession of man with respect to subsistence, as with respect to any other supply provided by him*; that subsistence has no influence in regulating the number of marriages peculiar to itself, or which is not common to it with the other kinds of circulant: that there will be, on the whole, an equilibrium between the amount of population and subsistence, as between population and housing, population and clothing, &c.: that the quantity of subsistence is entirely regulated by the number of hands employed in cultivation, and this number of hands, as in all other cases, is adjusted by the demand of population; and, therefore, that subsistence can be supplied to any amount demanded: that population, far from increasing rapidly according to the abundance of subsistence, is checked by a superabundance of food, and increases faster in proportion as the style of living is more frugal and rather approaching

to scanty: that the amount of population in a district is by no means regulated by the amount of subsistence raised in it: that population most probably carries in itself a correcting influence, which becoming stronger as population grows thicker, will prevent it from ever reaching its full complement: but lastly, that, until it reaches this complement, if ever it shall, the regulating power must be in the population, as Mr. Gray maintains, and not, as Mr. Malthus imagines, in subsistence.

## BOOK III.

### DOES POPULATION TEND TO OVERSTOCK WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYMENT?

#### CHAPTER I.

DOES POPULATION, IN ITS INCREASE, TEND TO  
INCREASE OR DIMINISH THE AVERAGE AMOUNT  
OF EMPLOYMENT?

HAVING ascertained, that population has no tendency whatever to overstock with respect to subsistence, I proceed to inquire whether it has any tendency to overstock in respect to employment and wealth. The regulating power of subsistence has been ascribed both to the former direct, and to the latter indirect influence, by Mr. Malthus and other subsistence theorists. And these influences have been mixed by them improperly; for, as has been already noticed, they do not necessarily infer each other. I have, therefore, separated them.

Employment is the medium of charging, and, consequently, the source of income and of wealth. If then population in its increase has

a tendency to diminish the average amount of employment, it must necessarily have a tendency to increase poverty.

Employment and wealth are essentially connected. It will, however, tend to greater clearness, and enable us to come with more certainty to a correct decision on the subject, to examine the influence of the increase of population on each of them separately.

That the increase of population does tend to diminish the average amount of employment, has always been a favourite idea with the multitude. It has been of late seriously adopted by our antipopulationists, and particularly by Mr. Malthus. They contend, that *population, in its increase, has a tendency to overstock, or to produce more than a proper degree of fulness, and consequently to diminish the average quantity of employment.*

On the other hand Mr. Gray maintains, that *the increase of population tends uniformly to increase the average amount of employment divided among circulators, by multiplying their wants and introducing new sorts of circulant; and, of course, to create an additional demand for hands.*

If the increase of population tend to overstock, or to diminish the average quantum of employment, it is evident, that the following results will be found uniformly to take place

in real life: The thinner the population, the greater will be the average quantum of employment, or the more constantly will the various members be employed. There will also, of course, be a greater demand for hands, and, consequently, a tendency to attract additional hands from the places more populous and less employed. If, again, the increase of population tend to create an additional average quantum of employment, the reverse will necessarily take place. The more crowded the population, or the more rapid the increase, the greater will be the demand for fresh hands; and there will be a perpetual tendency to immigration to the district from thinner peopled places. What then are the results in real life?

*In proportion as population is thin, or increases slowly, the members are uniformly, ceteris paribus, less generally or constantly employed: This holds true of all states of population, from the thinnest, or that of the savage, through all the intermediate states up to the most crowded, that has yet existed upon earth.*

The same principle is seen in constant operation, equally in small districts and in countries. In very thinly peopled regions, the great mass spend most of their time in idleness, or in half-employment. The average amount of the demand is smaller, while the average quantity of business done by individuals is less.

This is exemplified even amid masses of population in the same district or state, in hamlets, villages, towns and cities. In proportion as any of these are large, or increase more rapidly, *ceteris paribus*, the individuals, on the average, while they do more in a given time, are also more constantly employed.

To quote examples would be endless. Every district or country, every village and town, whatever be the rate of population, are examples and proofs of the principle. Indeed, in all common circumstances, it is so equable in its influence, that if we know the rate of population per mile, or the amount of the population of the village or town, we can with great accuracy infer the average amount of employment throughout the mass of individuals.

An increase of population, says Mr. Gray, is just as many new customers who add to the income of the great body of the old dealers much more than they take away, stimulate the circulatory powers, and operate towards rendering the whole national mass more extensive circulators.

"It is chiefly by these means, that an increase of population produces an increased ratio of the quantity of circulant divided among the whole. The process is uniform, and quite perceptible to the attentive observer. The new population makes the old circulators

to a greater extent. It presents a larger mass of customers, or a wider market to fortunate sellers. These acquire a greater quantity of circulating or of capital; and this gives existence to additional wants, while it affords them the means of supplying them. Thus they are enabled to be more extensive buyers of the various articles, both of the old and newly introduced sorts, from the neighbouring or distant sellers. To the butcher, the carpenter, the shopkeeper, the tailor, and the rest, they prove equivalent to a number, greater or less, of the common mass of customers. These sellers, again, by the increased demand for their articles from these fortunate circulators, are, in their turn, rendered better customers to them, as well as to the other dealers. Thus the operation goes on through all the connexions of buyer and seller, and uniformly tends to increase the capability of the circulative.\*

It is indeed impossible from the nature of things, that the result of the increase of population can be any other than an increase of employment and of wealth. When the subject is viewed in the light in which the author of the *Happiness of States* has placed it before his

\* *Happiness of States*, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 29. A minute analysis of the process by which the increase of population necessarily produces an increase of employment and wealth, is found in the chapter quoted.



readers, this seems self-evident. It is a strict mathematical truth.

The source of the error of the multitude and of our antipopulationists lies in considering a new member as a seller only, not as a buyer also, which he is. They, therefore, consider him as dispossessing the old dealers of part of their employment, whereas he in reality adds to the old amount\*. Every child, as soon as born, creates employment which did not exist before, and would not have existed without it; for it must be fed, clothed, lodged, nursed, &c. according to the rank of its parents. It thus gives additional employment to the farmer, the manufacturer, and the rest. And every year it will continue to give more, at least till about middle age. For some years, it is to be observed, it is a buyer and not a seller: it directly increases the demand, but not the supply.

According to Mr. Gray's calculation, every additional person will require, on an average, two acres additional to feed him. He must necessarily, therefore, create to the farmer alone all the employment required to bring two additional acres into cultivation, or to render a certain number of them already in cultivation additionally productive to that amount. He will also employ the manufacturer, builder, me-

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 27.

chanic, &c. in a corresponding proportion according to his rank. Between the years 1801 and 1811 the British population appears to have increased about 160,000 a year. This addition to our population would thus afford to our agricultural class alone employment equal to that necessary to cultivate 320,000 additional acres annually (or to fertilize lands under culture to what is equivalent to the produce of these); and to the builder, manufacturer, educator, &c. all the employment created by lodging, clothing, educating these persons. In fact, at the present rate of British income, every additional circulator adds about twenty pounds worth of employment annually to the sum total.

It is thus a self-evident mathematical truth, that *every addition to population must necessarily create a corresponding addition to employment.*

But though no person will for a moment dispute this truism, that the direct influence of an increase of population must necessarily be an increase of employment, to feed, clothe, lodge and educate them; yet it may be imagined, that there may arise an indirect influence, sufficient to counterbalance the direct. It is true, the new members are, of course, sellers or suppliers, as well as buyers or demanders. May then the additional supply, which they

will yield in their different lines, not injure the old suppliers, by depriving them of more or less of the usual amount of their supply? And farther, by an excess of produce, may it not cause an injurious fall in the price of the various articles? Thus, though the total amount of employment in a district or country must be increased, may not the average quantum shared by the greater number of suppliers, be less than before?

This indirect influence does certainly exist; and occasionally and locally, it may have a palpable effect. But it is opposed by contrary influences both direct and indirect, arising out of the increase of population, which are much more powerful. And the uniform result of these contending influences, on the average, is an addition to the average quantum of employment.

It is only necessary here to notice generally these influences\*.

Every new member increases the demand as well as the supply; and by both he creates

\* For a minute analysis of the process of creating additional employment and wealth arising from the increase of population, the reader is referred to the 2d, 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters of the 2d Book of the Happiness of States; and also to the Essays on the Effects of average high and low Prices in Miscellaneous Statistics, at the end of this volume.

an additional stimulus on the circulating powers.

In proportion as population becomes more crowded, the universal desire to obtain as great a quantity of the means of happiness as is practicable, operates more effectively. The circulators stimulate each other. Their wants become more varied, *and every additional want is a source of additional employment.* While new wants are created by this mutual stimulation and the higher degree of civilization arising out of it, the various circulators are also rendered more capable of supplying them, from the influence of the increasing demand, and its result, a greater amount of capital and wealth. If an additional window, table, or chair, or any article of clothing, or mere ornament, however trifling, or any thing not used by circulators before, be introduced, a new source of employment is created. The employment derived from the introduction of a single article, such as the umbrella, or of any little ornament in furniture of the value of a few shillings only, becomes in a crowded population immense. The persons employed in supplying these new articles become circulators by means of them, and thus sellers of what does not interfere with the sale of the old dealers, while they still remain customers to these, and indeed generally become better customers. This influence alone

infinitely more than counterbalances the effect of an additional average amount of supply.

The influence of the increase of price, of income and capital arising out of this, and which is also vast, will be afterwards noticed.

There is also an influence of great and universal force operating in favour of the increase of employment, which springs from the nature of man. The stimulus, which is created by any addition of employment and of wealth, operates along with the wishes of all circulators, to obtain as much of the means of happiness as possible\*. This forward stimulus, therefore, produces a greater effect than from its mere amount. The circulators ascend. But all tendencies to depression operate directly against their wishes. The circulators in selling, of course, labour to their utmost to counteract it.

The tendency in the increase of population to augment employment is seen *even in the difference of movement of persons in thinly-peopled and populous districts*. "The perpetual mutual stimulation arising from crowded masses of population has a perceptible influence on both the mental and corporeal movements. The mind, as well as the body, assumes an increased activity. The men in large towns

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 8. p. 113.

think, speak, move and act more rapidly than those of the country or in villages. In proportion as a town is more populous, the rapidity increases, till the difference between the extremes appears quite extraordinary \*."

This increase of employment arising from the increase of population is proved also *by the gradual extension of the use of machinery, in proportion as population grows thicker per acre.*

The grand object of machines is to shorten labour and enlarge the supply. If then the increase of human hands, or of population, tended to diminish the average amount of employment, instead of there being greater need of such a powerful substitute in more populous countries, there would be less: and yet we uniformly find, that the more crowded population is, the more general is the use of machines.

This is in fact the result of necessity. In populous and rich countries the demand for labour arising from the variety of wants which increase every year, is such, that human hands alone could not supply a sufficiency of it. In very thinly peopled countries, there is little or no need for any machines. Human labour is perfectly sufficient. But in a country peopled so thickly as Britain, it is utterly inadequate.

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 6. p. 98.

Even with the assistance of the common machines, such as the plough, the harrow, the cart, and the weaver's loom, &c. our population could not nearly supply its own wants. Indeed, it is probable, that mere human labour with all its exertions, if unassisted by machines, could not supply one third of the present demand of our island.

*The difference in the average amount of employment keeps constantly increasing from the thinnest rate per square mile to the thickest. Between the extremes, as between Sutherland and Clydesdale, Radnor and Lancashire, the Highlands and Middlesex, Siberia and England, the difference of this average is immense.*

In farther proof of the increase in the average employment arising from the increase of population (and this alone were decisive), *there is an unremitting tendency to emigrate from the less to the more populous districts in search of employment: for example; from the Highlands to the populous shires of Edinburgh, Lanark and Renfrew; from Scotland and Ireland in general to London; and from Switzerland to France and other well-peopled countries.*

On the other hand, *the more populous a district or country, the smaller is the emigration from either.* England, France, Hindostan, China suffer very little from emigration. They can not only employ all the hands which they

themselves produce, but they require an additional number from other countries which can supply them \*. This is strikingly true of England, probably the most populous for its extent of all. Hindostan and particularly China, two of the oldest and best peopled countries on the globe, have so full an amount of employment at home, that they have scarcely any emigration. Indeed they have had very little in proportion to their population for many ages. And they rather avoid than seek for foreign trade. What they possess has been in a manner forced upon them.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE REDUNDANCY OF EUROPEAN POPULATION IN 1816, CONSIDERED.

THE deficiency of employment in the memorable year 1816, has been used by some as an argument for a redundancy of population, not only in this country but throughout Europe.

A redundancy there certainly was. But was it for the time only, or will it be permanent? Was it the effect of occasional circum-

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 452.



stances; or did it arise out of the general results of nature's arrangements?

War, which fortunately is only an occasional state of affairs (though certainly a state in which many nations are but too often found), commonly yields an additional amount of employment. It also attracts a considerable number of hands to its peculiar modes of business. When these temporary modes cease to exist with their cause, the circulators who were employed in them, are thrown back upon the other classes. The demanders, with respect to the other lines, are thus suddenly diminished, while the suppliers in them are as suddenly augmented. There must, therefore, instantly follow a *rétrôgrressive* movement, both in point of business and of wealth, until the increase of population is able to find employment in the other lines for these supernumerary hands. This result, however, does not arise out of the natural effects of the increase of population, but of certain temporary circumstances, with which it happens to be connected: just as if any nation which used to deal extensively with another had chosen to give up all dealings with the latter, or if a people, from some sudden ebullition of folly, or perhaps from an enlightened view of things, had abandoned the use of some very extensive article which afforded a great amount of employment.

It has been said, that to send off these supernumeraries, by way of colonizing, for example, would relieve the others. This measure has even been suggested as a remedy for the deficiency of employment. Let us examine how far such a remedy would prove effectual, or whether the result of such a measure would be what is expected. Perhaps fully 500,000 persons were thrown wholly or partially out of employ, in Britain alone, by the sudden annihilation of the war-circuland. We shall assume that 300,000 were wholly deprived of their usual employment by that event, and that these 300,000 persons had immediately left our island. What would follow from this with respect to those who remained ?

If the demand, which included the amount created by these 300,000 supernumeraries, had continued as large as before, the other suppliers would have been benefited by this colonizing. While the demand would have been as before, the suppliers were fewer than before. But how could this possibly be? Our old suppliers, it is true, were now again just what they were before the close of the war; but then the demand had decreased to the whole amount of the articles used by these 300,000 supernumeraries. The cultivators would have found a depression in the demand upon them equivalent to the produce of 600,000 acres, and

the other classes of suppliers would have suffered from a corresponding deficiency. Calculating the amount of the demand of these supernumeraries at the rate only to which it appears to have sunk in 1816, or twenty pounds per individual (but were not many of these persons in very pinched circumstances, this amount would be much too low, as the general average includes children and ineffective persons), there would have been a further deficiency of six millions worth of employment, added to the amount already lost by the ceasing of the war-requisitions. The loss of this employment, and the still farther diminution of circulatory stimulus arising from it, would have considerably increased the war-deficiency and greatly added to the distress of our circulators.

So much for the remedy seen in the imaginations of so many in colonizing or sending off what they call redundant population. This, according to the principles of sound statistics, or of circulation as found in real life, is to attempt to increase employment and wealth by diminishing the very means of both. It is to endeavour to augment the stream by cutting off a part of its sources. Such notions, and they are too common on the topic of population, arise from looking at only a portion of the subject.

But, as I have had occasion, elsewhere to observe, "The circulators, whom peace has thrown out of employment for a time, are not entirely lost to circulation, as if they had fallen in war. Most of them have more or less income arising either from some capital, which they had realized, or from pensions. Those who have not, must find the means of obtaining by their relations, friends, or by working, food, clothing and lodging at least, though in a degree inferior to what they enjoyed before. Thus they all still employ the cultivator, manufacturer, builder, baker, butcher, tailor, &c. And the employment which they afford the latter, enables these to give some additional employment in return, till at length such of them as are disposed to become circulators in the peace lines, obtain a fair portion of employment and income."

The distress of some of the Swiss cantons in 1816 from a deficiency of employment, which prompted so many to emigrate, requires a particular consideration from the peculiar circumstances of their country. So large a portion of it consists of lofty mountains, which can never be made very productive of subsistence, that it cannot well reach a high rate of population when compared with territory; and few of its

\* III. All Classes productive of National Wealth, B. ii. ch. 3. p. 302.

towns will become very large. It will, therefore, always remain rather poor; and the amount of employment will be very limited, unless when it can succeed in supplying certain articles to the larger masses of better peopled countries. The natural progress of population, employment and wealth is thus checked by the circumstances of the territory. On the one hand, being poor and, consequently, frugal, its people will increase fast, but, on the other, from the country being unfavourable to the accumulation of population, and, of course, to the increase of internal employment, a spirit of emigration will be constantly cherished. Many of its people will seek abroad for what they cannot obtain at home. But when any change of foreign circumstances deprives these emigrants of employment, they are sent back to a country, where employment is at all times rather scanty. All the distress which took place in 1616 will necessarily be the result. And many of them will turn again to emigration as the only remedy.

From the principles of population and circulation, all colonizations must necessarily tend to diminish the employment and wealth of the mother country, unless in cases in which the new colonists draw the greatest part of their supplies from the latter. If, indeed, the emigrations be very extensive, scarcely any return

will counterbalance the deficiency caused in the home employment, by the diminution of the number of circulators. Our East India connexions add much to our internal employment and wealth; for the return is very great and the emigration but small. Besides, many of the emigrants return bringing back much wealth, and the accumulations of others who die in the East, are transmitted to add to the accumulations at home.

Our West India islands drain us of more emigrants, but they send us very large returns; and though many die in them, many also come back to spend their acquired wealth in the mother country.

A portion of the wealth, which has flowed in so copious a stream to this island from the United States of North America, since they became independent, may be fairly traced to the check given to the excessive emigration from it by the political separation of the two countries. This affords a most useful lesson to Spain. Were her governors acquainted with the real principles of population and of the production of wealth, and had they the courage to act upon them, they would at once declare their South American colonies independent, and cultivate a new connexion with them as commercial allies. The drainage of emigration

from the mother country has kept her population thin, and of course, poor. All the gold and silver of South America cannot counteract the influence of a decrease of population, or make even a stationary population rich. Spain would have been infinitely wealthier, if she had never possessed a single colony, or sent a single man across the Atlantic, than she has been with all the mines of Potosi and the rest. To lose men in order to gain gold and silver, is a miserable exchange. Should the South American states be lost to her, she will in a short time find these principles fully confirmed.

This is scarcely a digression. For the last three centuries, that is, since the discovery of America, Spain has exhibited a most melancholy and a most impressive lesson against the antipopulation theory. Let any statistician read this with attention, and believe if he can, in the advantages of checking population. This fine country, possessing such a vast variety of natural advantages, and drawing direct supplies of gold and silver to an amount much greater than that of all Europe beside, is at this moment among the poorest countries in Europe: and from one cause and its effects: a drainage of her people. Let her check this drainage, and keep her people at home, as generally residents, I mean, and she will find

the population theory as pleasingly verified, as the antipopulation theory has been unpleasingly exemplified for the last three hundred years. She will own with rapture, that *the grand source of the increase of wealth to a state is not the increase of territory, or of the precious metals, but of population.*

To return: The improvement, which has for some time been palpably taking place every where in this island, and also on the continent, is another proof of the constant tendency existing in the increase of population to augment employment. What I calculated on from this principle in the winter of 1816 is now taking place. "That great impelling power," the increase of population, "having recovered its sway, there is every ground to hope that the demand will weekly increase, though it must be for a long time yet at a slow rate. We have chiefly to fear lest the price of wheat, which is certainly above the fair average at present, should at length fall below eighty shillings; which seems to be about the rate of subsistence on which our present average prices of other articles have been formed. If, however, those of the cultivator keep at a fair price, by the end of 1817, there will be a very palpable and pleasing improvement in the circumstances of British circulators, and the national income will have risen considerably. Foreign circu-



lators will also benefit by this change and in time return it \*."

And to what cause can we chiefly impute this favourable change, except the increase of numbers? What is there in the circumstances of the circulators this year to produce such a difference in the amount of employment? How has the additional stimulus been created by the same number of men in the same circumstances? The usual increase of wealth and capital would do much, it is true. But unfortunately last year there was not the usual increase. Indeed, it is probable, that, in many districts, there was a real diminution of both. The more abundant crop of 1817 has been quoted, as a cause of the change. But the change took place before this fact could be ascertained; and the improvement went on, while the prospects respecting that crop were of the darkest kind. The higher prices and smaller quantity of 1816 would probably counterbalance the larger quantity and lower prices of 1817. Besides the improvement proceeded, though the prices of the cultivator gradually fell, and, of course, diminished the amount of employment which he was capable of giving. There has been much less than the usual quantity of speculation, in almost all lines, during

\* All Classes productive of national Wealth, p. 215.

the year 1817. Indeed, in most lines, there has been little or none. The increase of employment is, therefore, chiefly to be attributed to the average increase in the demand, necessarily created by the increase of population.

The slowness, the equability and gradual manner of the improving movement, show clearly, that it is owing to a general and regular cause. The improvement taking place on the continent is of the same equable and regular kind; and we are, therefore, to conclude, that as the same effect is produced, the same cause is operating there. The new houses which are appearing in so many of our districts, prove the fact of the increase of our population. Indeed several districts are building as extensively as in the most flourishing years during the war. But in most there is evidently an extension of buildings; and in some districts where this has not taken place, I have been informed, that empty houses are gradually filling.

This may partly be owing to so many persons, who were called abroad by the war, returning to settle at home. Such a result, by the way, confirms our reasoning as to this portion of population, which has been called redundant. But the return of those persons is, by no means sufficient to account for the extent of additional buildings; and these in opposition

to the strongly counteracting circumstances which have arisen from the great deficiency of employment in 1816. Nothing short of a very considerable real addition to our numbers in this country can be an adequate cause for so extensive an effect.

### CHAPTER III.

HAS ANY NATURAL PROPORTION WHICH SUBSISTENCE BEARS TO POPULATION WHEN INCREASING, A TENDENCY TO DIMINISH THE QUANTUM OF EMPLOYMENT?

THE statisticians, who maintain that the increase of population tends to overstock with respect to employment; ground their opinion on the notion, that such an increase creates a greater increase of sellers than of buyers. We have found this to be not merely unwarranted; but directly contrary to facts in real life; and that there results from such an increase a tendency of an opposite kind.

Mr. Malthus entertains a peculiar notion on the subject. He considers the supposed tendency in the increase of population to overstock, as arising from a natural tendency in

that increase to be more rapid than the increase of subsistence. As usual, indeed, he has not analyzed the operation of this peculiar influence, or explained the process, by which such a result is produced. It is only by hints, indirect insinuations and general affirmations, that he has broached the opinion.

“The constant effort towards population,” says he \*, “which is found to act even in the most vicious societies, increases the number of people before the means of subsistence are increased. The food, therefore, which before supported eleven millions, must now be divided among eleven millions and a half.” This, as we have seen, is to suppose a case, which cannot possibly in ordinary circumstances exist, or unless during a period of absolute famine. “The poor consequently must live much worse, and many of them be reduced to severe distress. The number of labourers also being above the proportion of work in the market, the price of labour must tend to fall, while the price of provisions would at the same time tend to rise.” Here, as is usual in the defence of this theory, the author assumes the very thing which is to be proved: and what he does assume, is contrary to the uniform tenour of facts in circulation.

\* Essay on the Principle of Population, vol. i. B. i. ch. 2. p. 25.

In addition to this, it has been urged in proof of a redundancy of population, or a *population exceeding the supply of food*, that, whether we survey agricultural or manufacturing districts, we find always some supernumerary labourers, or circulators either out of employ, or only employed for a part of the usual working time: in short, that, in all lines, there are generally more candidates for employment, than can obtain a full share.

In this we find another instance of that ardour in our subsistence theorists for pressing every evil or inconvenience among mankind, arising out of the inequalities of human agents, and the irregularities of human affairs, into their cause, by ascribing them to the increase of population and its imaginary consequence, a scarcity of food. This is sometimes carried to a pitch approaching so nearly the burlesque, that the sober statistician either doubts whether the theorist is serious, or smiles at his theoretic credulity. These sophisms, for they cannot be called deductions from real causes connected with their results, impose upon many, who either will not take the pains to discriminate, or who are not sufficiently acquainted with the subject to detect the fallacy. But let us leave personal observations, which a due regard for truth and science will not allow us in cases so glaring to refrain from altogether, for a consi-

deration of real causes and their results, which alone can enable us to reach truth.

That even in the largest town masses of population, and during the busiest times, there are partial slacknesses in certain lines, and that, while some circulators have more than the average quantum of employment, others have less, is admitted. From the inequalities, natural or acquired, of human agents, and a thousand accidental stimulating and counteracting circumstances, this ever has been and ever will be the fact among masses of population, however populous the district or the country. But what has this fact to do with deciding the question at issue? or what possible proof can it bring in favour of the subsistence theory?

The question is not, whether populousness and the increase of population will give all circulators full employment; but, whether, *cæteris paribus*, they do not tend to create a greater average quantity among individuals, than the reverse.

According to Mr. Gray, the more populous a district or country, and the more rapidly its population increases, from the savage state, through all the intermediate states, up to the most crowded, whatever be its condition with respect to subsistence, or whether it be of the exporting or importing class, the greater is the

average amount of employment in it, and *vice versa*. This seems still to be what it appears ever to have been, clearly the fact with respect to every district on earth, whatever its rate of population. It is then for the partizans of the subsistence theory to show by facts and strict reasoning from them, that the deficiencies of employment, which are partially taking place even in the most crowded and rapidly increasing population, would be proportionately fewer, were it to increase less rapidly, grow stationary and still more retrogressive. This is the point at issue here.

The increase of population, which, according to Mr. Gray, is the grand source of all permanent increase in employment and wealth, according to the subsistence theory, from its causing what is called a pressure on the limits of subsistence, and consequently a too great fulness, creates a diminution in the average amount of employment and a tendency to poverty. On the latter, therefore, the thinner the population, the better must it be employed and the richer must its members on the average be. From the thickest state of population through all the intermediate thinner states to the thinnest, the process of the population theory must necessarily be reversed. *Cæteris paribus*, the thinner will be better employed and richer, till we reach the hunter's state which will be the best

employed, and richest of all except when subsistence happens to be more than usually short. On this theory, check population and augment subsistence (were this indeed at all practicable for any number of years), and you increase employment and wealth.

This must be the result of the subsistence principle, if it have any real existence, or if there be any real meaning in the reasoning of its partizans at all. Now look at actual facts. And can any sober statistician give his serious belief to so wild a system for a moment?

It may be said, this is pressing the subsistence principle of Mr. Malthus too far. But in all rates, according to his views, population, instead of regulating the amount of subsistence as of other supplies, uniformly presses against the limits of subsistence: or, to state the fact as it is in real life, the amount of the supply of subsistence throughout the circle of districts connected nationally or commercially, will be always adjusted to the demand as nearly as is practicable, whatever be the rate of population. Where then, or at what rate of populousness or increase, for the same principle operates in all, is the stop to be made? The increase of population must either tend to augment employment and wealth, or to diminish it. And to check it must do the reverse. If the increase produces more employment and



wealth, the checking must injure the process and diminish both. If the increase again tends to lessen them, the checking must tend to enlarge them. The more it is checked then, on the latter supposition, and the thinner it becomes, the greater must be the increase of employment and of wealth. Sophistry, as usual, may attempt to evade this deduction from the principle of the subsistence theory, but it is plain straight forward reasoning; and I do not see how the partizans of that principle can get rid of the conclusion, even with all their acknowledged ingenuity in making the most stubborn facts quite pliable, and in limiting and explaining away.

But let us even refrain from pushing them so far on their general principles; and let us come to particulars. According to Mr. Gray's ideas, England should be more employed and richer than Scotland, but according to Mr. Malthus she should be less employed and poorer. She is much more populous: her resident population assisted by immigration is increasing rather faster, and she does not supply herself with a sufficient quantity of subsistence. Scotland, again, much thinner peopled, with a resident population increasing slower, raises a vast quantity of food more than she consumes. Poland, on the subsistence theory, should be better employed and richer

in proportion to its population than either France or Austria. Or if we descend to districts, the Highlands with their thin and slowly increasing resident population, while they raise such an immense quantity of surplus subsistence in the shape of black cattle and sheep, that for some months every year this surplus produce disturbs travellers on many of the principal roads of Scotland and England, must be much better employed and proportionately to their population richer than Lanarkshire, where population is increasing so fast, while it is forced to draw supplies of food from all its neighbours. Westmorland, for the same reasons, must be better employed and richer per individual, than either Warwickshire or Lancashire. Now what is the real fact with respect to these compared countries and districts, which are only examples taken from the great mass?

On this important part of the discussion, as with respect to all the others, I am forced to observe of Mr. Malthus and the partizans of his theory, that one of two things must be true. Either they are very imperfectly acquainted with the real principles of circulation; or they have been very inattentive to these in forming their opinions.

According to those unalterable principles; *every new comer is a buyer as well as a seller, and every tendency to a scarcity, when this can*

*be remedied, must operate towards augmenting employment.* Now he and they seem generally to overlook the former part of a new comer's character altogether, and they consider a tendency to scarcity, as creating a diminution of employment among circulators. The latter notion requires some consideration.

A scarcity of provisions, whether real, or, as is much more frequently the case in civilized and populous countries, imaginary, uniformly *raises their price much above what the real deficiency would warrant.* This tends to enrich the cultivating class and those classes which deal in provisions; and prompts as well as enables them to give an increased amount of employment, by carrying on improvements and extending cultivation, and also by a more liberal domestic expenditure. The consequence is an increased demand for labourers in the various lines. The price of labour necessarily rises partly to meet the higher charges of the cultivator and partly from the enlarged demand for hands. In the course of the last twenty-five years we have seen what immense capitals have been realized by the cultivators in consequence of scarcities real or imagined, and we have seen the great increase in the demand for hands, as well as the wages of labourers more than doubled. The scarcity years, as they have been called by the people, 1796, 1801,

1812 and 1813, were particularly prominent for the spirited exertions in improvements that followed, and for a demand for agricultural labourers. There was an universal complaint among the farmers of a want of hands.

Scarcity, it is true, may in some cases of supply be so excessive as to diminish the wealth of the suppliers. This happens when there is such a failure of produce, that no price procured for the small quantity actually supplied will reimburse the supplier for his loss. But all scarcities of necessary articles at least tend to prompt greater exertions, and of course to increase employment.

The year 1815 put the theory of Mr. Malthus with respect to employment and wealth, to a new trial of an opposite kind. And abundance was found equally decisive against it as scarcity. During that eminently fertile year, we saw wages fall and employment decrease, and all for a reason, which according to his imaginations would produce quite the contrary effect; that is, from a superabundance of food. Such was the abundance of the supply compared with the demand, that prices fell far below what would pay the farmer, or enable him to reproduce employment even to the usual amount. Thus a vast diminution of employment and an unusual degree of poverty were caused by what on the subsistence theory

should have created wealth and a more than usual quantity of employment.

The influence, which Mr. Malthus supposes in the increase of population compared with the state of food, in diminishing employment, is thus as imaginary as the rest of the peculiar influences supposed to exist on the subsistence theory. In fact, if a tendency in population to increase faster than subsistence operated among circulators, the result would be directly the reverse of what Mr. Malthus imagines. The excess in the demand would give both the farmer and his people better prices, and render an additional number of hands necessary.

The increase of population also uniformly tends to promote luxury or the use of superfluous food. The necessary result of this must be to increase the proportion of circulators requisite to raise subsistence. If people in general use a larger quantity of food than before, surely the production of this additional quantity, must produce a corresponding increase in the amount of employment.

Besides, in cultivating a country, the lands which are by nature the most fertile, or which are best circumstanced, in point of climate, situation, or population, are first chosen for the plough\*. In proportion as it fills, the lands more unfavourably situated, are had re-

\* *Happiness of States*, B. vi. ch. 8. p. 476.

course to by the cultivator. Now these lands require more labouring. The constant and large supply of manure necessary to give them an artificial fertility to a profitable degree, and to keep them up to that pitch, contribute also greatly to increase the cultivator's business. Let us make some exceptions for good lands too far at first from the principal seats of the population, and we may lay it down as a correct position with respect to cultivating a country, *that the thicker its population, the land uncultivated, or imperfectly cultivated, will in fertilizing them to the profitable degree, create more employment per acre.*

It is admitted, that from the superior modes of execution, and the machinery gradually introduced by population in its increase, the cultivation of land will at a higher rate of population per square mile, require fewer hands than at a lower. The difference from this cause may at length be so great between a very thin and a very thick rate of population, as more than to counterbalance the employment created by the greater obstinacy and infertility of the soils. It is probable, for example, that such a difference has arisen with respect to cultivation throughout Britain, as well in England as in Scotland, from her rate of population in the tenth century and her rate at present, that barely half the number of cultivators per square mile is now employed *directly* in culti-

vation. But it has been shown, that, though the number directly required for the same quantity of work may be decreasing, if we include all the *indirect* employment created by this change, in the construction of the machines, and preparing the materials of wood, iron, brass, &c. the demand for human hands is increased, and will keep increasing \*.

Besides, were it even true, that the employment created by the same business, including both the direct and indirect sorts, is diminished in a thicker rate of population, this result by no means springs from any limiting influence arising out of a more rapid increase in population than subsistence. It flows from the superior skill and capital, which are uniformly produced by the increase of population.

Mr. Malthus, as far as I understand him, appears to entertain the notion of the multitude, that population in its increase interferes with places already full, and is checked by this fulness. A vacancy must take place, or a new comer must either displace one of the old circulators, and thus throw a supernumerary on his own class or other classes of society, or must himself remain a supernumerary. A diminution in the average amount of employment

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 7. p. 106. Third Letter to M. Say, All Classes productive of national Wealth, p. 301.

must, therefore, necessarily ensue, with its inseparable concomitant, a fall in price.

That the multitude, who are uniformly led away by first appearances, should entertain such a notion is not to be wondered at; but such a tendency in the increase of population to create supernumeraries, or such a re-action tending to counteract the influence of its own progress, is so contrary to the uniform tenour of the general results actually arising from that increase in real life, it seems strange, that it should be admitted by any statistician. But there is no occasion here for going into the subject again, as it has been already fully shown, that the increase of population creates new species of circulant, and in its progress, is continually enlarging the old and opening up fresh sources of employment.

Mr. Malthus seems rather to have a fondness for inverting the arrangements of nature in the case of population, and for turning the effect into the cause. It may be queried, whether he has not done this with respect to the twenty-two Dutch villages mentioned by him, according to the registers of which the marriages were annually one in sixty-four. This is a very unusual proportion. But he finds the mortality also to be correspondingly great, of one in twenty-three. He thence concludes that the former extraordinary proportion was



“merely occasioned by the rapid dissolution of the old marriages by death, and the consequent vacancy of some employment by which a family might be supported\*.”

But is it not more likely, that this great mortality was caused by the unusual proportion of marriages, than that this unusual proportion of marriages was caused by the great mortality? Such a proportion of the former shows, that marrying in those villages must have been particularly early, and, of course, particularly productive. Now, it is well known how large a portion of infants dies in all countries. The mortality among these added to that produced by the very unhealthy climate of Holland, accounts naturally and fully for the great number of deaths. And I am much more inclined to be of Sussmileh's opinion, respecting the cause of the flourishing of marriage, or, that it springs from the great variety of means of obtaining a livelihood in Holland. A friend of mine, who has lately travelled through that very populous and, of course, very rich country, says “they are all *populationists* there.”

That certain successors do marry in consequence of the death of their predecessors and taking the place of the latter, is true. This,

\* Essay, &c. vol. i. B. ii. ch. 4. p. 445.

however, is a kind of mere transfer event with respect to circulation at least, unless the successor should by his personal character be a more active circulator than the deceased person, or the reverse. But by the death of one, the stimulus created by one is evidently lost. And farther I fear, that the death of a circulator, if he be a married man and a father, by the injury generally done to the incomes and prospects of the widow and children, is, on the average of cases, rather calculated to retard than promote marriage. We may constantly see instances, where the death of a father both injures the means of procuring income among his sons, and ruins the prospects of obtaining an early settlement among his daughters.

But to return to the particular topic in discussion: it seems perfectly clear, from the principles of circulation, that, were there any real tendency in population to increase faster than subsistence, such a tendency, far from diminishing, as Mr. Malthus imagines, would necessarily increase employment. It would create an additional demand for cultivators, and besides, by raising their prices or incomes, enable them to expend more largely, which is equivalent to giving more employment and income to the other classes.

"The great cause which fills towns and manufactories," says Mr. Malthus, "is an in-

sufficiency of employment, and consequently of the means of support, in the country \*." This is a movement which is constantly going on in every district and country, and most extensively in those, which are increasing most rapidly in numbers, and are, of course, most flourishing.

It is surprising, that a statistician of such acuteness as Mr. Malthus, in writing such a passage, did not perceive that this universal movement completely overturns the leading ideas of the subsistence theory and of his *Essay*, and completely establishes those of the population theory and the Happiness of States, as the laws of nature. Circulators are constantly going from the agricultural to other lines, and from a thinner state of population to a thicker. And why? Confessedly from a constant deficiency of employment in the former. Does not this prove, that the supply of the cultivator's articles, or subsistence, instead of being generally deficient, is, on the average, rather the reverse, or above the demand of population; and, therefore, these circulators are constantly forced to withdraw from the cultivating to other lines, where the demand is greater in proportion to the supply? Had there been a general deficiency of the sup-

\* *Essay*, vol. iii. B. iii. ch. 14. p. 58.

ply of food, there would have been a perpetual tendency to detain the whole of the circulators already engaged in cultivation or in those branches of employ immediately connected with it, as well as those young additional circulators produced by the increase of population. Yet, according to Mr. Malthus's notions, there is a constant deficiency in the supply of food, and, of course, in the number of suppliers.

Again, if a thicker rate of population did not create a greater average amount of employment and wealth, why should circulators keep constantly going from a thinner? How could they be absorbed there? But there is an incessant absorption of them in those thicker and more rapidly increasing masses. A greater rate of populousness and increase of population, therefore, produces a greater average quantum of employment and wealth\*.

And yet, according to the antipopulation theory, from the population of towns feeling a too great fulness in all or most lines, there must necessarily be a constant tendency to emigrate to the less full or thinner peopled portions of a district or country: a tendency directly the reverse of that in nature; for, with certain peculiar or local exceptions, this is con-

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2, p. 45.

fessedly from the thinner to the thicker peopled portions.

It is a pity but our statisticians would accustom themselves to reason patiently from facts.

I shall conclude this interesting portion of the discussion, respecting the influence of the increase of population on the quantum of employment, by summing up in the words of Mr. Gray.

“ Every man requires a number of persons, of various descriptions, to labour for him, on an average proportioned to the amount of circuland which he possesses. The circulator worth ten thousand a year will give full employment to several persons, perhaps from twenty to thirty, and partial employment to a very great number, probably, in the whole, equivalent to about two hundred fully employed. But a circulator of the great mass could not give full employment to one : and this deficiency on the part of that body allows the employers or circulators to a greater amount to obtain the extra hands they want. An increase of population, with its necessary attendant, an increase of circuland, enables the great circulators or employers to become still greater, and it operates the same way with respect to the rest. It increases the demand of all ranks, by still creating additional wants, and affording the

means of supplying them. New and more extensive buyers or consumers, of course, require new and more extensive sellers, or manufacturers. *Instead, therefore, of tending to overstock, an increase of population tends to enlarge the demand for hands in general rather faster than the supply.* This supply is furnished not only from the more rapid increase of population from earlier marriage and immigration, but from the greater quantity of work performed in the same time by the circulators in their various lines. In a district crowded with population, the average quantity of work produced by the individuals is double and often three or four times the amount of that of a thinly peopled district. With all the increase in the number of hands and in the average quantity of their work, the more crowded the district, the more general is the complaint of a scarcity of hands, except on some failure in business arising from temporary circumstances; while in districts with a thin population, there is almost uniformly a complaint of an overabundance of hands and a want of work, and the consequence is a constant emigration to more populous places. Thus reciprocally an increase of population tends to increase circuland, and the increase of circuland to increase population\*."

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 44.

## BOOK IV.

DOES POPULATION IN ITS INCREASE TEND  
TO AUGMENT OR DIMINISH THE AVERAGE  
AMOUNT OF INCOME AND WEALTH?

### CHAPTER I.

THE SOURCE OF PRODUCTIVENESS IN POINT OF  
WEALTH, AS OPERATED UPON BY THE INCREASE  
OF POPULATION.

HAVING already gone so fully into the question of the source of productiveness as to wealth\*, which is essentially connected in some points with that which we are now discussing, I shall content myself here with a few general observations.

M. Quesnay finds the source of productiveness, or wealth-producing quality of things, in the labour alone connected with the cultivation of the soil. Dr. Adam Smith has extended this quality, and admitted within the productive circle some other kinds of labour. He considers the wealth-producing quality to

\* All Classes productive of national Wealth.

reside in something solid, which can be exchanged or disposed of for a price. M. Say \*, who ranks himself in the unproductive school of the latter, finds this quality in utility.

Of M. Quesnay's theory, I have to repeat, that its limitations are directly contrary to facts. His productive employment is rendered really productive by means of other species of employment, and from a fall in the price is sometimes unproductive; while other forms of employment are productive for the very same reasons, as that of cultivation. Dr. Smith's limitation is also contrary to facts. The solidity of the form of circulant has, of itself, no productive quality. It creates wealth only when it is united with what renders all other species of circulant productive or profitable, chargeability. M. Say's quality of utility seems liable to the same invincible objections †. It is productive only when found in the same state of combination. Unless an article can be disposed of for a profit, its utility is unpro-

\* The very ingenious author of the *Traité d'Economie Politique*. Of his letter to Mr. Gray, in consequence of Mr. Gray's four letters to him in the Appendix to *All Classes* productive, it is but justice to say, that it carries the marks of the candid statistician, the philosopher, and the gentleman.

† See Mr. Gray's Letters to M. Say on the source of productiveness, in *Miscellaneous Statistics*.



ductive, and will create no income or wealth to the circulator; while articles, that do not possess the quality which we understand by the term utility, if combined with profitable chargeability, produce both.

It is, therefore, the chargeability of an article, or of employment, in a word, of circaland, or its power to procure a price and a profit, which is the value producing quality, or what yields income and wealth. Whatever possesses that is the means of reproduction, or of producing new employment, income and wealth all round the circle; and whatever does not possess that quality at all, is utterly unproductive of all three. This seems to me to have been so strictly demonstrated, that, till the demonstration is shown to be faulty, I shall assume the thing as completely proved.

It is, however, to be observed, that the existence of a tendency in the increase of population to promote the progress of wealth, or to check it, cannot be inferred from the principles either of the productive or of the unproductive theory. All classes may be productive of national wealth, and yet the increase of population may have a tendency to check the progress of wealth. On the other hand, there may be certain classes unproductive, and yet the increase of the number of our

circulators may accelerate their progress with respect to income and capital.

If the increase of population have an influence towards augmenting their wealth; this must arise from its tendency to *increase the average demand*, and, consequently, to enable the great mass both to obtain a larger quantum of employment, and also, what follows from this, a better average price for it. On the other hand, if the increase of population has any influence that operates against the progress of wealth in a country, or to keep its amount stationary, it must be by rendering the average quantum of employment among the circulators smaller, and of course, producing a depression in the average price. In the former case, the demand has a tendency rather to keep before the supply, and consequently the sellers will have a predominant influence in fixing the price. In the latter, the supply will have a general tendency to exceed the demand, and the buyers will possess that influence.

Now we have already seen, that the increase of population uniformly tends to augment the average amount of employment. And, what follows clearly from this in theory, a tendency in price to rise, is equally verified by facts. An increase in the demand and an increase in price are, in fact, reciprocally cause and effect to each other. The former

tends to raise the rate of the latter, and a rise in the rate of price, by enlarging the expenditure, tends to augment the demand. Thus the average demand and the average rate of price keep gradually advancing according to the rate of the increase in population: and the result is a general increase of wealth in a country from its thinnest peopled state up to its most crowded.

The general fact of circulation is, that "*circulators in using circulant add to a heap* \*." The multitude and statisticians in general, however, entertain an opinion quite contrary, or that circulators take from a heap, and thus are constantly diminishing it. This is indeed the source of all their errors on this subject, and what renders their conjectures concerning results so incorrect, that are they commonly contradicted by facts.

They overlook an essential link in the chain. In paying for what they buy, it is true, they take away more or less of their own income; for the time; and, in obtaining a price for what they sell, they take away, for the time, more or less from the income of others. This taking away, or diminishing, they perceive; but they do not attend to a necessary part of the fact, that in both cases, *they are creating fresh em-*

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 25.

*employment*, and thus actually supplying and in general adding to the real source of wealth, the means of charging. What they pay away becomes income; consequently the source of expenditure and employment to others, and to themselves again in the circle: and what they receive, becomes income and the source of expenditure to themselves. Thus all, by giving away, are creating fresh employment, or, as Mr. Gray has familiarly expressed it, adding to a heap.

If we analyze the process of nature in the increase of employment and wealth, we shall see that the increase of population must necessarily add to the average quantum of employment and wealth.

The wants of men are the source of all employment and charging. The intervention of that artificial medium of charging, money, which is, in reality, merely "a set of counters," does not alter the nature of the transactions between circulators. It tends greatly to convenience and to rendering exchanging easier; but the same result would take place, if men still continued to give one article for another, as was the case before the invention of money. John wants something which James produces; and James wants something which John produces: John is willing to give so much of what he has to James for so much of what he has,

and James is willing to gratify him. This is the cause of all circulation, and the source of all exchangeable wealth. When money is used in the transaction, it is to measure the quantity of one thing to be given for a quantity of another, or to enable each to exchange or charge more accurately and conveniently, as well as to obtain what a circulator wants, from those who do not themselves want what he makes in order to be able to charge. Either by the quantity of things mutually wanted, or by money which can procure these, *charge is met by charge*. This is the mine, from which all wealth is drawn. And as there is no limitation to the amount of charging, this mine, or the source of wealth, is evidently inexhaustible. The more circulators draw from it, or the higher the rate they charge, the more extensive it becomes.

In the earlier periods of society, when men are either in a savage state, or just emerging from it, and consequently very thin with respect to territory, their wants are few, because they are ignorant. Most of these wants they are forced to supply, each circulator for himself, as far as they are supplied. But in proportion as they grow more numerous, their wants increase with their knowledge and with the means of procuring what they want. The supply of the various kinds also becomes more

and more confined to certain classes, till in a very crowded community, for example in London, the division of it is carried to an extraordinary degree of minuteness, as well as distinctness \*. Thus from the thinnest to the most crowded state of population, the wants of circulators keep constantly increasing in variety, and the means of supplying them enlarging, till the difference in point of variety and quantity becomes astonishing.

These additional wants necessarily create additional employment. And as the new wants of the circulators and the new articles used by them, are generally not a substitution for the old wants and articles, but a real addition to them, and as most of the increased numbers use an average portion of both the old and newer kinds, the result must be a constant increase of the means of wealth.

How then, with such results necessarily springing from an increase of population, can this increase produce what Mr. Malthus and some others have imagined, any tendency to poverty; that is, to a lower average amount of employment, and a lower average rate of price? Such a tendency seems utterly impossible.

Let us begin with the more necessary spe-

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 6.

cies of circuland, for these were used earliest, because they were necessary, and proceed to the more luxurious, and we shall find the wealth-augmenting process going on with the increase of number. In the very thin periods of population the seeds of the elementization of labour are sown; but the produce is very incomplete. Most circulators perform many sorts of work. But whether the labour be performed promiscuously by individuals in general, or by distinct classes, the result will be the same.

The cultivator deals in the most necessary of all sorts of circuland; and he is the first principal exchanger. But does the builder of houses or maker of clothing render him poorer, because they draw from his income more or less of their income? They are taken from the great mass, to labour at other kinds of supply than his. They become buyers from him, and obtain the means of paying him by selling articles of a different sort. Thus, while they diminish the number of suppliers of subsistence, which there would be, were there no other mode of labour but cultivation, they continue demanders of it. And surely the average tendency of withdrawing superfluous suppliers from any line must be to advance the rate of price of the articles which they supply.

Let us now proceed to the various classes,

created by the business of governing a people, or those of soldiers, lawyers, public office persons, &c. the same result takes place. These classes are taken from the mass of circulators to sell other sets of articles, and continue buyers from the cultivating, the clothing and building classes. If we go on to the classes employed in the business of education, of medicine, of service, of amusement, still we find the same result: portions of population are withdrawn from the old lines, to become sellers in certain additional lines, while they continue demanders with respect to the former.

Population, as it increases, elementizes business more and more, and separates the various modes of employment more completely. At the same time that it tends to reduce the proportionate number of the various classes of suppliers, it operates towards quickening the demand.

Along with this is constantly operating that universal principle among all classes of circulators, the desire to obtain as large a quantity of the means of happiness as possible. The increase of numbers, by enlarging the market, enables them to gratify more and more their wishes. The result, therefore, must necessarily be an average increase in the quantum of wealth.



## CHAPTER II.

CERTAIN THEORETICAL OBJECTIONS TO THE  
WEALTH-AUGMENTING PRINCIPLE OF THE IN-  
CREASE OF POPULATION EXAMINED.

It may be said, that the universal wish of sellers to obtain as large a quantity of the means of happiness as possible, is counteracted by an universal wish of a contrary kind among buyers. It is so. But the general increase in the demand on the whole, and the forward impulse given to circulation by the improving style of living, enables the various classes as sellers ultimately to carry their point against the buyers \*.

The operation of the increasing drafts on the general fund of paying, some may suppose, must also tend strongly to check a rise in this amount. This fund, however, is of an inexhaustible nature. It consists of charging upon those, who in their turn countercharge to reimburse themselves. The higher the various classes are charged upon, the higher they countercharge all round the circle. Thus the fund, instead of being diminished, keeps constantly

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 8. p. 114.

increasing with the increase in the drafts upon it\*.

But it may be urged farther, that though the average demand may be necessarily augmented by the increase of numbers on the same extent of territory, yet the greater adroitness of the suppliers, and their growing capability of doing more work in the same time, with the aid of machines, may be more than sufficient to raise the average supply up to the enlarged average demand. The consequence must be a tendency to an injurious depression in price.

It is admitted, that *the price of the supply* forms an important point of consideration. Both the amount of the supply of an article, and the price of it, must be combined together: for a larger amount, with a smaller price, may not produce so much income to the circulator as a smaller amount with a better price†. And it is certain, that, in general, circulators do become more adroit and produce a larger quantity of articles in a more crowded than in a thinner state of population. But it is very evident, that all this increased adroitness, even with the extensive and increasing aid of machinery, is barely able to keep up the supply

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 12. p. 147.

† See Essays on the Effects of average high and low Prices, at the end of this volume.

to the growing demand. And though in some instances, the rate of wages for doing the same quantity of work may become lower, yet the difference in the quantity performed is so considerable, as greatly to counterbalance this. The price of many articles in crowded societies is cheaper; and yet the profit accruing to the maker from his adroitness, and doing more work in the same time, is much larger.

The rise in the price of things, it may be urged, does not always enrich the circulator in a more crowded society. If he gets more for what he sells, he has to pay more for what he buys; and thus he is only where he was before. But why are these higher prices asked and obtained? Is it not chiefly to enable the various sellers to pay for a better style of living, or to answer the demands of government, which are necessarily connected with giving additional employment? And each in countercharging to meet the increased charges of the rest, in order to obtain the means of living better, charges something additional. The increased rate represents equally the better style of living of each circulator himself and of his neighbours. Thus this average rise in price ultimately places all but fixed annuitants in a better state than before.

It is true, in the progress of a nation, whose population is increasing, towards greater

wealth, there are many transfer cases both with respect to classes and to individuals. "Every rise in any species of circulant," says Mr. Gray, "is more or less injurious to many at first; for, while it adds to the profits of the sellers of the article, it diminishes those of the buyers. It is, however, gradually met by an additional charge on the part of the latter, and also tends to increase the amount of sale. It thus ultimately proves advantageous to the whole community, with the exception of annuitants with fixed incomes. Sellers are frequently losers for a considerable time, till they obtain a necessary rise: on the other hand, they as frequently gain by anticipation, or by being enabled to charge higher than the case strictly requires\*." To the great mass the average result of the rise in price, caused by an increase of population, on comparing any two terms, say of ten years, is a greater average quantity of wealth.

The author of the *Happiness of States* is, therefore, completely warranted in the conclusion which he draws. "It is thus universally true," says he, "that every increase of population tends to increase the average amount of income shared by the whole. But it is not meant to be affirmed, that every equal increase

\* *Happiness of States*, B. ii. ch. 11. p. 145.

of population produces an equal increase in circuland, or wealth. The ratio of the increase of the latter depends so much on the character and peculiar circumstances of the population, and the quantum of stimulus, which these reciprocally give to each other, that this ratio admits of innumerable varieties \*."

"There are some nations that amount in population, to the half, or the one third, of some others, and yet from their greater natural or acquired advantages, and the superior activity and diligence of the people, they have a larger portion of the rich than the latter. But suppose two nations in similar circumstances, and of a similar character, differing only in population. In the more numerous, there will uniformly be a greater proportion of the rich; and the more rapid the increase of the population, the more rapid will be the increase of these wealthy individuals. The same thing holds with respect to the same nation at the different periods of its population. When it contains but four millions, it will have more than proportionately fewer rich, than when it amounts to six. And when it reaches eight the rich will bear a still greater proportion than when it had six, according to an increased

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 32.

ratio. To quote one example out of many, by way of illustration : when the nation contained but four millions, the annual income of its more respectable merchants, or bankers, would not exceed, say, twelve hundred a year ; and consequently they could not give their chief clerks above one hundred and fifty pounds a year. At eight millions, not only will these classes be more numerous than according to the former proportion, but the average annual incomes of the individuals will have risen to three or four thousand a year, and they will give four or five hundred a year to their chief clerks, and so on in an increasing proportion, according to the increase of population. In the latter period we see there is a new rich class consisting of the principal clerks of merchants and bankers. Other new rich classes might also be mentioned. These, instead of confining themselves, like their predecessors, to the cheaper comforts, are enabled to indulge a little in luxuries ; and thus they assist in augmenting the quantum of circulation or the means of additional income. In sum, *the increase of population, though its influence on the production of wealth has been but too much overlooked, is the great, indeed the sole original cause of the permanent increase of wealth\*.*"

\* Happiness of States, B. II. ch. 10. p. 124.

## CHAPTER III.

THE EXISTENCE OF A WEALTH-PRODUCING INFLUENCE IN THE INCREASE OF POPULATION, FULLY PROVED BY FACTS.

FACTS uniformly join to confirm the theoretic conclusion of the Happiness of States, that *the increase of population is the grand, indeed the sole original cause of the permanent increase of wealth.*

Whether we examine towns, districts or countries, we find that in proportion as any of them is more populous or increases more rapidly in number of inhabitants, *cæteris paribus*, it is more wealthy or increases more rapidly in wealth.

It would have been sufficient to have shown that the increase of population augments the income of a country according to the old average rate, to prove that this increase continues to keep the whole mass (including the new members) in at least as good circumstances as before the addition. But Mr. Gray proves much more. His doctrine is, that "*from the very nature of circulant, every increase in the number of circulators necessarily tends to increase it, and not merely according to the average quantity of the former dividend, but also*

*according to a new average quantity, which is augmented in proportion to the new members.* Thus to adopt a number for an example: suppose there are in a small island 400 circulators, who, at an average, divide annually 20,000, or share 50 each: if the circulators be increased from 400 to 500, they will divide annually, instead of 25,000 according to the old average, say, 30,000, or share at the new average of 60. The latter numbers are used merely for illustration. The increase depends upon so many circumstances, that it may be with respect to all numbers, in all possible proportions: increasing proportions are meant\*."

The very increase in individual wealth proves this. If the new numbers shared only at the old rate, though the nation would be possessed of more wealth as a body, yet the individuals would be no better off, as they would share only as before. But facts universally show, that individuals, by all additions to their number, are enabled to divide a higher average amount.

The uniform result of the increase of population is an influence constantly operating towards enabling the various classes of society to obtain a greater average amount of the good things of life. This influence operates alike

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 26.



in favour of all ranks, from the lowest to the highest: and it keeps increasing in power and efficacy from the thinnest rate of population, when a few families or tribes are scattered over a vast territory, up to the most crowded. The more rapid the increase of numbers also, the more effective does the influence prove.

Mr. Gray has given us various examples which completely establish the active existence of this principle of population, or the wealth-augmenting influence of its increase.

This influence derives much of its efficacy from bringing men more together. "The more compact, or crowded the population," says Mr. Gray, "*ceteris paribus*, the more wealthy will it be. A population of a million, at the rate of four acres to a man, for example, will possess a larger quantity of circuland, than the same population at the rate of five acres to a man, and so of any other differing proportion. The reason is, that the more close the population, the more do the individuals stimulate one another, and the greater their artificial wants, as well as the means of supplying them. It is to be understood, however, that in the district of four acres to a man, the towns are in their due proportion larger than those in the district of five. If the towns of the former were much smaller, the latter district might possess a greater quantity of circuland, and share a

higher average of income. Large masses in towns, from the strong reciprocal stimulus reared by them, and the taste for luxury which they produce, have a powerful influence on the island. A town containing 600,000 inhabitants would possess and divide many times the quantity, that would be possessed and divided by an extensive territory over which the same number was loosely scattered. London, including Westminster and Southwark, divides more than two thirds of the Russian empire in point of mere extent; and probably not much less than the United States of America, with all their thousands of square miles. The income of the county of Middlesex, including the cities of London and Westminster, amounts to more than one half of the rest of Great Britain. In these remarks, the classes above the poor are meant.\*

Mr. Gray has given a table of the comparative wealth of England, Scotland and Wales†, which shows clearly the operation of this principle of population among these large masses, varying so greatly in their circumstances as they do. England, allowing for her difference in size and numbers, is to Scotland, in point of wealth, as about three to one, and to Wales as about four to one.

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2, p. 33.

† Id. B. ii. ch. 2, p. 37.

He has exhibited the actual result of population with regard to wealth in twelve of the counties of England, agricultural, manufacturing, commercial and mixed, and differing most widely in their circumstances and their rate of population \*. These results clearly establish the powerful influence of his principle of population as to wealth. The more populous and the more rapidly increasing each is, the greater is its wealth.

The same result we find, if possible, still more strikingly confirmed, if we examine the same nation in its different periods as to population. In its very thin state, when population is, as it were, beginning to operate, it is wretchedly poor. When it reaches a very crowded state, it has become very rich. As its population increases fast or slow, we find it, on comparing any average term of years, growing more or less rapidly wealthy. Let the statistician consult the history of any state he pleases, and he will learn, that however greatly nations may differ in other circumstances, in this point they uniformly agree. When again the population of a state goes back, we find it sink with the decrease gradually into greater poverty. Let the Roman empire and all other states, which

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 2. p. 40. See the Table completed for all the counties of England and Wales, in Miscellaneous Statistics, at the close of this Inquiry.

had become very populous, and afterward retrograded with respect to population, be consulted for examples and proofs of this observation. Italy has for some centuries been increasing in population a second time, though slowly; and allowing for so many unfavourable circumstances, there is a corresponding increase in her wealth again.

Indeed the wealth-augmenting influence of the increase of population is so clearly seen in reading the history of population in all states, that the reader must be completely blinded by theoretical imaginations, who can entertain the least doubt about it.

The uniform result of the increase of population is thus *an increase in the average quantum shared by the great mass of individuals.*

A town of 100,000 souls, for example, according to the old proportion should divide only twenty-five times the amount of what it divided, when it contained only 4000. But what is the uniform result in real life? Compare the present income of Liverpool, which has sprung so rapidly up from a little town, with what this was, when it contained about 4000 souls; and is the former only twenty-five times the amount of the latter income? It is probably much more than two hundred and fifty times that amount.

If we compare towns, that are not trading

or manufacturing, in their different states, we shall find a similar result, or an increasing proportion of wealth. But the increase will be, in general, by no means so great; for manufactures and trade connect places with an external population: and this connexion, by giving them a greater share of the wealth-augmenting influence, tends to increase the indigenous wealth more rapidly.

Let us next compare towns of different rates of population, and precisely the same results are presented to us. Kelso in 1811 contained 4408 souls: York 19,009, and Edinburgh, exclusive of its sea-port Leith, 82,244. But is the comparative wealth of these towns, which are not manufacturing, at all in the mere proportion of their numbers? The manufacturing town of Kilmarnock, which contained 10,148 souls, should share about the one tenth of the income and wealth of the manufacturing city Glasgow, which contained 100,749. But does this bear any resemblance to the real proportion of their wealth? Glasgow again, now the second city in Britain in point of population, enriched by manufacturing employment as well as extensive foreign connexions, should divide according to its own rate, about the one tenth of London. But such is the increased rate of London, enriched as it is also by extensive manufactures and foreign

connections; that, excluding the income derived from the national funds except what its own people draws, this first city of Britain divides more than fifty times the amount of the second.

Is it said, that towns or districts which are more populous, or which are increasing in population, have a greater amount of capital and employment, than when they were less populous, or than other towns which happen still to be inferior in population; and that this tends to produce greater wealth? Granted. But what has created this greater amount of capital and employment? Is it not their additional population? When towns or districts grow less populous does any such increase of capital or employment take place? Uniformly the reverse. Even the same amount of population spread loosely over an extensive district, will not, *ceteris paribus*, divide any thing like the same quantum of income as when brought closely together in a town. And the same amount of population spread over a large territory at the rate of fifty persons at a square mile, will never till doomsday at all approach the same average amount of employment income and capital, as when it is spread over a district in precisely the same circumstances, excepting that it is at the rate of 100 persons per square mile.

The average quantity of capital found

among different rates of population proves also the wealth-augmenting influence of the increase of population. "Capital," says the author of the *Happiness of States*, "depends very much, or rather entirely, on the rate of population. In proportion as population is thin, capital is small. And the more crowded and extensive the population, the greater and more numerous are the capitalists in every line \*." We uniformly find, *ceteris paribus*, that the more populous a state is, the greater is its amount of capital; and that, from the thinnest to the most crowded state of population, capital, on the average, keeps growing uniformly more abundant.

The improvements in the style of living among all classes, in necessities, comforts and luxuries, through the various divisions of circulateable, food, lodging, clothing, education and the rest, correspond with the increase of wealth, according to the populousness of a district or its rapidity of increase in population. This indeed must necessarily be the fact, for an increase of wealth and improvements in living mutually represent each other. They are also to each other reciprocally cause and effect. The higher rate of price, and of wealth among all classes springs from the higher charges of these classes in consequence of the greater

\* *Happiness of States*, B. ii. ch. 9. p. 177, 118.

abundance or greater varieties of articles used; and the more extensive or varied use of these articles, again, creates a higher rate of price and wealth, and so on. The improvement among all classes, in these points, agrees, like the increase of wealth, with the increase and crowdedness of population. As a country grows more populous, or towns grow more crowded, *ceteris paribus*, the style of living grows uniformly better, that is, contains in it a greater abundance or variety of necessaries, comforts and luxuries.

The progress is visible frequently on an average of twenty, or even ten years. But between the style of living in the thinnest states of population, as the savage, or the state beyond the pastoral, and that of the more crowded countries, as when it reaches one individual for five or fewer acres, the difference is infinite. The difference between the style of living in a hamlet or little village and a town of 100,000 souls or more, in the same country, is also vast.

In towns which have increased rapidly we can trace the wealth-augmenting influence of the increase of numbers even in the appearance of the old and new parts. The ugliness and inferiority in point of comfort in the former are quite perceptible. Indeed they generally form a striking contrast till in the progress of the



increase they are pulled down, and rebuilt upon the new style of convenience, comfort and elegance. The ugliness and inconvenience of our old towns, and of the older parts of our more flourishing towns are standing proofs to the observing statistician against the anti-population theory.

Another uniform result in these towns proves the same thing. The increased population occupies a much larger space of lodging, than according to the old rate. The smaller extent of space occupied by a given number of inhabitants in towns in their less populous state, may sometimes indeed be partly accounted for by certain local circumstances; but the great cause of the average enlargement is found in the increase of wealth among all classes. When the town was small, the population was poor; and for cheapness the people crowded together, as the inhabitants of small towns do at present. But as the various classes grew richer, and could afford more for lodging, they chose to have a more ample and comfortable space. A greater proportion of the families would have a whole house, or a larger portion of a house to themselves. Thus the extension of towns, as Mr. Gray observes, points out the increase of population and its increase in wealth combined.

\* Happiness of States, B. iii. ch. 11. p. 291.

All these actual causes and real results join to establish in the most clear and satisfactory manner the doctrine of the Happiness of States, that the increase of population tends uniformly to increase the wealth of a people according to a new and enlarged proportion. Of this Mr. Gray quotes a recent and very striking example in his fourth Letter to M. Say. In the course of the late war the population of Britain increased, with a rapidity which perhaps it never before reached; and what was the result in point of wealth? "The 300 millions sterling (of income) it is true, was shared, in 1814, probably by about 18 millions of people; and the 140 millions sterling, among  $10\frac{1}{2}$  millions of people only. Still the latter shared only 13*l*. 6*s*. 8*d*. each, while the former shared 23*l*. or about 70 per cent. more. In this most interesting and pleasing statistical result, by the way, we have a decisive confirmation of the doctrine of the Happiness of States (which involves so many important consequences and overturns the foundation of the theory of Mr. Malthus), *that in proportion as circulators increase, the average quantity which they share is increased also in a new and additional proportion.* (R. ii. ch. 2. p. 25.) Had the 18 millions of circulators in Britain shared according to the old proportion of the  $10\frac{1}{2}$ , the income of Britain would have been augmented only to 173

millions, whereas it actually rose to 300\*." And of this addition to the national income only "36 per cent. were for government and 62 per cent. for ourselves."

A more complete confirmation of the actual operation of the wealth-augmenting principle of the increase of population as well as of the doctrine that *all species of circuland, possessing the quality of profitable chargeability, whatever their character, are productive of national wealth*, cannot be conceived than this. The increase of population was perhaps beyond all example with us. Many of the years, from their ungeniality, were unfavourable to the production of subsistence. And never was there in Britain such an augmentation in the species of circuland which have been reckoned unproductive by Smith and others. And what was the result? There is every reason to think, that there never was so rapid an increase in the average amount of wealth in the same period of time.

In sum, no principle in science, no cause in nature, seems more clearly established, than that the increase of population is the grand original source of all permanent increase in wealth. We uniformly find that, *cæteris paribus*, a country is poor in proportion as it is thinly

\* All Classes productive of national Wealth. Appendix, p. 312.

peopled and rich in proportion as it is more populous: that in proportion as its people increase slow or fast, its progress in wealth is slow or rapid. What is the irresistible conclusion from all this? To quote extremes, what has made the difference between Finland and Holland, Norway and Britain, or yet between Britain and France in the time of Julius Cæsar, and Britain and France under George the Third and Louis the Eighteenth, in point of wealth? That man must be wretchedly ignorant, or blinded by the grossest prejudice, who can see poverty uniformly combined with a thin population and wealth with populousness, and a progress in wealth with an increasing population, and a retrogression in wealth with a population that is decreasing or even stationary, and yet refuse to admit the wealth-augmenting influence of the increase of population.

From the great practical importance of this principle, which some statisticians of name have lately opposed, I have been thus particular in my detail of causes and facts. But indeed to quote particular examples seems unnecessary except for illustration. Every hamlet, village, town, district, country, has in all ages been, as it is at present, a proof and example either directly or indirectly of the irresistible tendency of the increase of population to increase wealth.

In reality, to say a town, a district, a country is, *cæteris paribus*, more populous, is equivalent to saying that it is more wealthy; and to say that, *cæteris paribus*, it is less populous, is synonymous with saying that it is less rich. To tell us that any town, or district, or country is increasing more slowly or rapidly in its numbers, is to inform us, that it is advancing more slowly or rapidly in wealth. On the other hand, if we learn that either town, district or country is decreasing in people slowly or rapidly, we have no occasion to be informed of the melancholy result, that it is descending slower or faster into idleness and poverty, and suffering more or less severely from all their miserable concomitants. Even stationariness of population has a depressing influence. The torpor produced by it checks the natural progress of circulators in point of wealth.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE DECREASE OF POPULATION TENDS TO RENDER  
CIRCULATORS POORER.

It is presumable from the result of a principle operating so vitally in circulation, in the

case of an increase, that the converse will be true of a decrease of population. As the stimulus created by the increase, augments wealth in a new increased proportion, the withdrawing of that stimulus by a decrease, and the consequent torpor and depression, must certainly have a tendency to produce a greater diminution of average wealth than the amount of the decrease of numbers according to the old average supposes.

It is true, the influence of the increase of capital, of a higher rate of price and a better style of living, introduced by the increased population, which have all something fixed in their character, and which, in the increasing of population, co-operate with its influence, acts against the influence of a decrease, and must tend in a greater or less degree to check it. The stagnation and general diminution of stimulus, necessarily springing from a decrease of population, most probably, however, are on the whole sufficient to overpower these completely, and to produce a tendency of the directly opposite kind to that of the increase, though it may not be quite so strong.

Fortunately in Europe, it would be difficult at present to find any example of this on an extensive scale. Population seems to be on the increase in most of her nations and districts. In India the following statement of

the country held by George Thomas to the north-west of Delhi \*, and which is presented to us by a writer who in laying it before his readers had nothing theoretic in his view with respect to population, we find a proof of the existence of the opposite principle in its decrease.

| Pergunnahs.                                 | Former Number of Villages. | Present ditto.                | Former Revenue. | Present ditto.                  |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 14  | 950                        | 283<br>as 1 to $3\frac{1}{3}$ | 14,80,000       | 2,86,000<br>1 to 5              |
| Held by Mr. George Thomas of the Mahrattas. |                            |                               |                 |                                 |
| 5   | 374                        | 151<br>1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$    | 5,80,000        | 1,44,000<br>1 to 4              |
| Total 19                                    | 1324                       | 404<br>1 to $3\frac{1}{4}$    | 20,10,000       | 4,30,000<br>1 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ |

Here, (assuming an average loss of population in the villages destroyed) we see, the diminution of the villages in the 14 Pergunnahs was as from about  $3\frac{1}{3}$  to 1, but the revenue fell to the one-fifth of what it was before. In the five Pergunnahs held of the Mahrattas, the former had fallen as from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 1, while the latter had sunk to the one-fourth. Taking all the Pergunnahs together, the population had de-

\* Memoirs of George Thomas, by Captain Francklin, p. 92.

creased as from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  only to 1, while the wealth had decreased as from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 1, or in the proportion of 42 per cent. more. The reduction of the revenue, however, in the Mahratta Pergunnahs was in a greater proportion to the diminution of people than in the others.

The whole forms a striking proof and illustration of the reality of the wealth-reducing influence attributed to the decrease of population in the Happiness of States, and, of course, to the contrary influence ascribed to its increase.

But whether this augmenting rate in the decrease of wealth, arising out of a decrease of population, be general or uniform, it would require a much more extensive and correct mass of information respecting such cases than we possess, to establish completely. But there is every probability on this side, and none on the other. With respect, however, to the general tendency of the decrease of population to produce poverty, facts and reasoning are alike decisive on the subject. Not a town, a district, a country that has decreased in population, in ancient or modern times, but affords an example and proof of it. And the increase of poverty certainly never falls behind the decrease of people, but in most cases seems plainly, according to the principle of Mr. Gray, to outstep it.



It is worthy of particular notice in analyzing this part of the subject, that *in those cases, in which checks are evidently imposed on the growth of population, whether these be natural, or artificial, a deficiency of wealth is the uniform result.*

Of the former or natural checks, we have examples in mountainous districts, such as the Highlands of Scotland, Switzerland, the regions of the Pyrenees, of Caucasus, and numerous other portions of the globe, whether of larger or less extent. These districts have a tendency to prevent the accumulation of population, and they are uniformly found to be much poorer than the neighbouring lowlands, where population reaches a thicker rate. A mountaineer and a poor person, seem almost synonymous terms in this point.

Borough towns again, afford examples of population artificially checked. The source of the policy of these is indeed found in the very notion which is the basis of the anti-population theory. *The fewer the circulators the more will they share.* But how do facts agree with this imagination? These places are uniformly poor in proportion as they are restrictive; and as eminent for sloth and idle habits, as for want of spirit. The residents, whom the regulations allow to settle and whom these are intended to protect and encourage, far from

being enriched by the restrictions in their favour, are impoverished by them. These boroughmen are not even so rich as those circulators of a similar rank in towns of the same number of souls; but which are free to all comers. They are also inferior both in industry and spirit. The boroughs, with few exceptions, advance equally slow in population and in wealth. Indeed for the most part, they are in a stationary condition amid all the wretched results that spring from this torpid predicament. It is only when circumstances enable them to overpower the influence of restriction that they ever attain to eminence. Of this Glasgow is an illustrious example. But with respect to the great mass of close boroughs, want of spirit, sloth, slovenliness and poverty are uniformly as much their characteristics, as activity, industry, energy, and wealth are of open towns, which permit an unrestrained increase of population.

These boroughs, or restricted communities, are examples of what would follow from the checking or restrictive regulations recommended by Mr. Malthus and other antipopulationists. And they afford an impressive warning to the statistician,

## CHAPTER V.

A TENDENCY TO PROMOTE POVERTY, ASCRIBED BY SOME STATISTICIANS TO THE INCREASE OF POPULATION, EXAMINED.

THE multitude, as has been already noticed, seems always to have cherished the notion that an addition to circulators tends rather to make the former poorer. It is very obvious from whence this opinion takes its origin\*. Even statisticians themselves in general, appear to have been disposed to entertain the same notion, and on the same grounds, from a partial view of the subject. They looked on the new or additional circulators only as additional sellers or suppliers, who consequently diminished the quantum of the sale of the former residents, and not as they were also, additional buyers, who, therefore, must necessarily increase the demand. Had they attended to facts they would have uniformly found that these showed their first views to be erroneous, and that the result of this increase in sellers and buyers was an increase in the average amount divided by all; that is, in wealth.

\* Happiness of States, B. I. ch. 2. p. 26.

This impoverishing tendency in the increase of population has been rather insinuated, indirectly assumed, or loosely maintained, than clearly and distinctly taught as a doctrine. To affirm, that the more populous a town, a district or a country grows, each rather grows poorer, is so diametrically opposite to what is within the view of every person, that to have maintained such a doctrine in plain terms, would have startled even those who entertain an opinion of this sort, but in an indefinite shape. It has, therefore, been taught by insinuation, or in a roundabout manner, or only with reference to portions of population in certain circumstances.

Mr. Hume has deformed his Essay on the Populosity of ancient Nations\*, with a notion of this sort. "Where each man had his little house and field to himself, and each country had its capital free and independent; what a happy situation of mankind! How favourable to industry and agriculture; to marriage and procreation! The prolific virtue of men, were it

\* In this Essay he has given up much sound reasoning on the stimulating as well as counteracting circumstances, and has satisfactorily established, that the amount of the population of those nations has been greatly exaggerated. It is, in an unusually excellent spirit, and indeed, in some points, what I should not have expected from this writer. It does as much credit to his heart, as to his head.

to act to its full extent, without that restraint, which poverty and necessity impose on it, would double the number every generation \*."

It is not meant here at present to inquire whether the results of such a situation of affairs would have been just what he imagines. And it is very evident even from this passage itself, that he is a populationist both in spirit and in theory. But he seems to insinuate that the poverty necessarily caused by the rapid increase of population tends to check its rate of increase. And that is clearly unwarranted by facts.

1. This writer had such an imperfect knowledge of the constituent parts of price, as well as of some of the leading principles of circulation, and of the real source of productiveness, that upon these topics he very frequently blunders. Of this we have a strong proof in the paragraph, from which the quotation given above is made. "Enormous cities are, besides, destructive to society, beget vice and disorder of all kinds; *starve the remoter provinces, and even starve themselves by the prices to which they raise all provisions* †."

Such a passage shows how little the principles of statistics, that seem now so obvious,

\* Hume's Essays. Essay XI. Populousness of ancient Nations, p. 418.

† Id. ib. p. 417.

were known or attended to, when this statistician wrote. This mode of cities starving themselves might pass in the mouth of the rabble as nothing out of the way, but it seems strange enough from a statistical writer. The high price is a mean of attracting more than the necessary quantity of subsistence, as the cultivator and corn-factor will always be disposed to send their articles to the market which affords the higher price. And if provisions be higher in large towns, wages are at a higher rate in order to meet theirs.

And next, how do these drafts tend to starve the remoter provinces? This is as sound statistics as to affirm, that from the immense quantity of cotton goods required for the consumption of London, and drawn from Glasgow and Manchester and the neighbouring districts, London was a mean of robbing Lamerkin and Lancashire of clothing. The market of London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool and other large towns not only enables the cultivator of the most distant and worst cultivated districts to attempt with success land which he could not have meddled with without its demand, but by creating additional employment, puts it in the power of more of the residents to obtain a better share both of necessities and comforts. Indeed, large

towns uniformly tend to render the most remote and thinly peopled districts of the country richer than they could be without such a connexion, by transferring to them a portion of the supply of their own extra demand.

The year 1816, which will long be memorable in the history of statistics, as affording such impressive examples of the operation of all sorts of causes, gave a decisive answer to this starvation of the remoter provinces caused by great cities, though in the converse way. From the inferior quality of the wheat of the north of England and of Scotland in general, that year, London and other great cities would not buy. But were these provinces fed more abundantly by having their corn kept within themselves? A very considerable portion of the farmers were reduced to the greatest distress, and many actually ruined, while the lower ranks, from the deficiency of employment arising out of this, were in a general state of distress. Indeed, they would have been in a state of actual starvation amid plenty, had it not been for the benevolence of the other classes of society.

If by the poverty and necessity, which Mr. Hume speaks of, as preventive of the increase of population at a rate equal to its natural one, the intense poverty and necessity arising out of

that increase, this is the leading imagination of the subsistence theory, and we have only to repeat the question, how is this effect produced? The result of the increase of population in real life is uniformly, as we have seen, quite the reverse. That increase tends to promote both wealth and abundance.

This obscure passage, however, admits of a different interpretation. He may mean to say only, that were it not for the *artificial* poverty and necessity, created by other situations of affairs less favourable to the increase of population than those found in these small commonwealths, population would double itself every generation; and all the beneficial effects arising from so rapid an increase would follow. I do not believe an increase so rapid would result from this cause; but, if it did take place, there would unquestionably be a corresponding increase in the means of obtaining necessities and comforts among all ranks of the augmented numbers.

But if we interpret this passage in the former sense, it amounts to nothing. It is a mere opinion. And we have seen how *slightly* and uniformly facts are upon the other side. Let then the abettors of a contrary principle in population, or a tendency in its increase to arrest the progress of circulators in wealth, and to render them poorer, bring forth in opposi-



tion to the host of facts in favour of the wealth-augmenting principle, not to say an equal number, but a single solitary fact either to prove or illustrate their principle. Let them show us a single town, district or country, which, *cæteris paribus*, has grown richer than each was before, from a decrease of population. All ancient and all modern times cannot afford them one.

It has been attempted to adduce Ireland, as a proof that the population of a country may increase rapidly without a corresponding increase in wealth. In that country there are undoubtedly some circumstances extremely adverse to the increase of income and of capital. Yet even there, in spite of the counteraction of these, the wealth-augmenting principle of the increase of population has been seen in general operation, as every where else: and especially within the last thirty or forty years, during which the increase of numbers has been the most rapid. The rental alone is said within the last twenty-five years to have risen from six to fifteen millions. But this rise is so extraordinary, that some exaggeration may be suspected. The wealth of the other classes has increased very considerably, though it can scarcely be conjectured to be at a similar rate with that ascribed to the cultivator.

We have noticed an obscure opinion of Mr.

Hume. This statistician seems evidently partial to the system of small farms. Another statistician, of the opposite side with respect to the size of farms, expresses the impoverishing influence arising from the increase of population in clearer terms, and Mr. Malthus has quoted him with great satisfaction.

“France itself,” says Mr. Arthur Young, “affords an irrefragable proof of the truth of these sentiments; for I am clearly of opinion, from the observations I made in every province of the kingdom, that her population is so much beyond the proportion of her industry and labour, that she would be much more powerful and infinitely more flourishing if she had five or six millions less of inhabitants \*.”

Here we have an irrefragable proof, and why? Mr. Arthur Young *is clearly of opinion*, and Mr. Malthus agrees with him. This indeed may be reckoned a decisive proof by some partizans. But there are statisticians, who, on the other hand, *are clearly of opinion*, that it is utterly impossible in the very nature of things, that the population of France or of any other country can be “beyond the proportion of its industry and labour,” or that the proportion of the latter can be increased by diminishing the number of circulators, that is, in fact, the

\* Young's Travels in France, vol. i. ch. 17. p. 469.  
Malthus's Essay, vol. iii. B. iv. ch. 11. p. 286.

amount of the demand; and that every unit added to its population, from being a buyer as well as a seller, creates an additional demand, and increases the stimulus on the circulatory powers. In all the countries which have decreased in population since the commencement of history they find *irrefragable proofs*, that France would neither have been so powerful not yet so flourishing, had her population at the close of the eighteenth century been reduced to what it was at the beginning, or rendered at least five or six millions less. Does Mr. Arthur Young really believe that the population of France was as well employed and as rich when it consisted of eighteen or twenty millions as at present? Or how far does he mean to go back, or what is the rate of population per square mile, which he in his imagination fixes upon as raising most industry, producing most employment, and, of course, creating most wealth? As he and Mr. Malthus seem so fond of reducing population, perhaps, they may not choose to stop, till they reach the period some two or three thousand years ago, when all Gaul did not contain a million of souls. Then indeed they may be clearly of opinion, that her population bore so correct a proportion to her industry and labour, that she was better employed and more wealthy, or, in the words of our statistical tourist, much more powerful

and infinitely more flourishing, than now when she is so distressed and so unfortunate, as to possess on a similar extent of territory, it is said, nearer thirty than twenty millions. To such absurdities do these visionary dogmas reduce our antipopulationists.

"If you would see," says Mr. Arthur Young, "a district with as little distress in it as is consistent with the political system of the old government of France, you must assuredly go where there are no little proprietors at all. You must visit the great farms in Beauce, Picardy, part of Normandy and Artois, and there you will find no more population than what is regularly employed and regularly paid; and if in such districts you should, contrary to this rule, meet with much distress, it is twenty to one but that it is in a parish, which has some commons which tempt the poor to have cattle—to have property—and in consequence misery. When you are engaged in this political tour, finish it by seeing England, and I will show you a set of peasants well clothed, well nourished, tolerably drunken from superfluity, well lodged and at their ease; and yet amongst them, not one in a thousand has either land or cattle\*."

I quote this passage only to point out the appearance of the cloven foot, and to show,

\* Travels in France, vol. i. ch. 17. p. 471.

that our tourist in this rhapsody against population, was probably only giving vent to his fondness for large farms. That the system of small farms tends to keep more hands in the business of cultivation than is necessary, and rather to promote idleness among the peasants, is true. It is also true, that while this system retains more hands than are required, these hands cultivate the soil less effectually. And this is the fact, I believe, with respect to a considerable portion of France. But why should population be reduced, that farms may become large? Large farms and increasing population are perfectly compatible with each other. Indeed were this the place, it could be shown, that one of the effects of an increasing population, is a tendency to enlarge farms. In his fury for great farms, he has run full against one of the clearest laws of nature, and, as ever must be the result of such attacks, dashed at once his theory to pieces.

France, far from "presenting spectacles of wretchedness in every quarter from her too great population" to all, as this agricultural tourist affirms she did to him, has exhibited every where scenes of so different a description to some other tourists, who have visited her since she had reached a still higher degree of populousness, that they have not hesitated to give the preference to her

against England. Mr. Gray also, like thousands of our countrymen, has been a tourist through a portion of this well-peopled country, and he agrees neither with Mr. Arthur Young, nor these later tourists. He neither saw spectacles of wretchedness in every quarter, nor did he every where see such substantial marks of wealth as in England. It is true, he saw her at a time of general stagnation through her domains, as throughout all Europe. But he found the real principles of population in as complete operation, and beheld their usual results as distinctly in her territory, as they are seen every where else. Her people, allowing for the diminution of employment, produced by the annihilation of the war circeland, were every where tolerably busy. The marks of the wealth inseparable from such a high rate of population were also very distinctly perceptible every where, but certainly, he affirms, not in a degree equal to that generally found on this side of the water. This population tourist, it is true, is a most decided populationist, and his opinion, like that of our antipopulationists, is not above suspicion of a little theoretical bias like theirs; but he confesses, he is clearly of opinion, there were irrefragable proofs every where that her people in general were much more constantly employed and wealthier, than

when they amounted to only two thirds the number on the same territory.

Mr. Arthur Young, however, is, or at least was, of a very different opinion. The great population of France is her chief misfortune and misery. "The predominant evil of the kingdom (France) is the having so great a population, that she can neither employ nor feed it; why then encourage marriage? Would you breed more people, because you have more already than you know what to do with? You have so great a competition for food, that your people are starving, or in misery, and you would encourage the production of more, to increase that competition \*."

But where is the proof that France can neither employ nor feed her population? It is one of the clearest results in nature, that the increase of population carries in itself the means of employing and feeding itself not merely according to the old proportion, but a new and increased one. And what is there in the history of French statistics, that contradicts this, or does not positively support it? Look to the wonderful exertions which the population of France has been able to make against all Europe for above twenty years. There we see the resources of such a mass of population,

\* Young's Travels in France, vol. i. ch. 17. p. 471.

and what they are capable of producing. Much was drawn from the countries which her armies overran, it is true, but did it not lead us away from the subject of our discussion, and tend rather to embroil us in party-politics, it could be shown that more was drawn from herself, that by far the larger part of what her armies drew from other countries was spent in these, and did her but little good, and that her own home resources formed the great fundamental moving power of those wonderful exertions.

As to feeding herself, we have seen, that, though her population has increased since Mr. Arthur Young wrote, she has been several times in an exporting condition with respect to subsistence. The lowness of her average price of food is a decisive proof, that her supply is equal to the demand. Under the manœuvrings of the Duke of Orleans and other revolutionary chiefs, artificial famines took place about the time of Mr. Young's visit. And occasionally since, as in our own country, prices have risen from the circumstances of the season, and from speculation ; but the price on the whole has been fair, and, perhaps, rather too low. One of the leading arguments of our agriculturists (whether Mr. Young himself was among them, I know not) against the corn bill was drawn



from the abundance of subsistence in France, and the low rate of its price.

And what Mr. Gray saw when he visited her, confirmed the fulness of the supply. The slothful ineffective manner, in which the greatest portion of her lands over which he travelled was cultivated, far from showing any strong stimulus operating on the cultivators from a very brisk demand, proved quite the contrary. The perseverance in so slovenly and imperfect a system must have arisen from a superfluity of the supply, and a consequent slackness in the demand.

As to "a competition for food," I should have thought Mr. Arthur Young was too good an agriculturist, not to know experimentally, if not to perceive it theoretically, that this must tend to produce an effect quite the reverse of what he states, or to enrich the cultivators and the country instead of impoverishing them. We have had most striking examples of the immense addition to agricultural capital as well as of the increase of employment among the other classes through their expenditure, within the last twenty years, from the competition for food. This competition must necessarily, according to the law of statistics, raise the price and afford more income.

The "demands of town population," which Mr. Young alludes to, will always increase in

every country with the increase of population, and certainly not less, if not more in France, than in most other kingdoms. In those districts of that country, which Mr. Gray travelled through, he found little or none of our kind of country population, or the population of cottages, farm-houses or hamlets. With a few local exceptions, the population seemed to be all in large villages and towns. The stimulus created by any increase in their population, must evidently, therefore, partake of the large village or town character.

Mr. Arthur Young, in supposing that the reduction of five or six millions of people out of five and twenty, would increase the average quantum of wealth, falls into the error, which is radical in the subsistence theory. He looks only at one side of the subject. He imagines that by reducing five or six millions of sellers, we shall enable the sellers that remain to sell more than before. But if he were to take into consideration, that by this reduction he reduces at once five or six millions of buyers also, he would be somewhat startled. And he might be disposed to query how it is possible, that the same stimulus can be created among the cultivators of the same extent of territory by eighteen millions of buyers as by twenty-four, were he even not to trace the effects of this sti-

mulus round among the other classes of circulators.

Assertions of general distress are just as easily made as those of general comfort. A theorist, when travelling, is very apt to look only at those facts which seem to confirm his opinions, and to overlook those which have a contrary aspect. The distress and misery which our subsistence and antipopulation theorists see in such a state of exuberance every where, may very easily be traced, for the most part, to their own imaginations. What distress does actually exist, arises from the condition of human nature, and not from the operation of their principles.

We want not assertions, but proofs. Let them prove to us, that the history of all districts and countries increasing in population, with few if any exceptions, shows that the increase tends to diminish the average quantum of employment and wealth among the various circulators; and that, on the other hand, the history of all districts and countries in which population has decreased, shows that this decrease produces a larger average proportion of employment and of wealth. Till they can do that, all their assertions about exuberant distress and misery from the increase of population will pass with the statistician only for the result of imagination, or else for facts, the causes of which they quite misconceive.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INCREASE OF THE POOR IN ENGLAND.

It is objected, that *there has been a rapid increase of the poor in England, along with the increase of her population.* This is true.\* And so has there been, along with the increase of her wealth.

Mighty stress has been laid on the fact of the increase of paupers among us, by the subsistence theorists; but without reason. It has as much force to prove that the great body of the people of England is growing poorer, as the fact of many of our noblemen spending on eating, drinking, clothing, building, &c. more than twice the amount of what they spent forty years ago, or that they pay more than double to the farming, clothing, building and teaching classes, has to prove that they are grown poorer than they were at that period. Such a fact, according to the principles of circulation, proves quite the reverse of what it has been brought to prove. It shows, that the great body of the people of England is grown much richer, as it is able to pay, at a higher average rate, to a larger mass of paupers.

The taking of a large sum at once from a

nation, for an unusual purpose, as for example by an invading foe, will produce a temporary poverty. Such a charge is not provided against, and cannot, on the sudden, be countercharged for on the common fund. But if a people continue to pay a greater sum year after year for the maintenance of any class within the country, the fact shows, that the great body has the means of charging for it, or how else could they pay it? Persons may grumble, but mere grumbling will not enable them to pay. If instead of two pounds formerly paid annually, three, four, or five pounds are claimed from a circulator who has only the means of charging at the old rate of two pounds, the demander will find, that though he may call, he will call in vain. Let any person consider the sixth axiom of Statistics as given in *All Classes productive of national Wealth* \*, and he will instantly perceive, that if a nation continue to pay an increasing sum for any purpose, it must have greater means of paying for it: that is, it must be able to countercharge for it amply: and this is a proof of its growing richer. Were England not increasing in wealth,

\* B. i. ch. 2. p. 10. " *Whatever circulators continue to use, they must have the means of charging for upon what they deal in. Were it not so, they must of necessity give up the use of it, from not being able to pay for it.*"

she would soon pay fewer paupers, and these at a lower rate.

Were it even granted that the increase of pauperism springs wholly from the increase of our circulators, this would not prove that the increase of population has any tendency to increase poverty in a district or a country; for if it makes a portion poorer, it makes the great body richer. "The amount paid by England to maintain her poor in the year 1776 was under two millions, and in the year 1817 it was above eight; but was the average wealth of the various classes of the people of England in 1776 equal to the average wealth in 1817\*?"

The increase of pauperism is unquestionably a great evil, and every one will admit, that it would be a most desirable thing to be able to check it. But the question connected with the population and subsistence theories is, Does this increase of pauperism show a general increase of poverty, or is it combined with a general increase of wealth?

In fact it springs chiefly from the latter. The real cause of the increase of paupers in England, and in the average rate of charge for them, is found, as far as this is beyond the usual proportion, in her growing richer. Were she less wealthy, her lower ranks would have,

\* See Mr. Gray on the Poor, in Miscellaneous Statistics.

in general, stronger habits of frugality. "Such is the nature of man, that the wealthier a country, the greater will be the proportion of vicious poor in it. For the richer a nation, on the one hand, the easier is it for its circulators to find employment in early years; and the less likely, therefore, are the various classes to learn prudent and saving habits; and on the other, it is better able and more ready to attend to the claims of the needy. The lower classes of England are, I fear, scarcely so frugal and prudent as those of other countries; and the English pay more to them when in want, because they are more able to pay: that is, because they are richer. The plea of distress is set up: they grumble, and demur, and then admit it\*."

As the increase of population necessarily tends to create new species of circulation, and, of course, to add to the sources of wealth, the average result, upon the whole, will be greater wealth. But the greater variety of situations in which these new species of circulation place men, will expose more circulators to failure. There will be a greater variety of mere transfer cases even in spite of prudence in the dealer. When we consider the natural dissimilitude of character among circulators, which springs from the different innate predispositions and original in-

\* Mr. Gray's Third Letter to M. Say. All Classes productive, p. 305.

equalities in human minds, and which cannot be essentially altered, we must expect imprudence among many, and, of course, all its consequences. These innate dispositions and original inequalities unquestionably tend greatly, on the whole, to promote the happiness of society ; but they produce also occasional evils. If England continue to increase in population and wealth, she must expect that her charges to support both the unfortunate and vicious poor will increase. We may partially check this evil, but we shall never do it away.

It is only by means of friendly societies, and saving banks, and other institutions of that kind, that any thing really palliative can be accomplished. All other plans to oppose the natural consequence of greater wealth, or the relaxation of frugal notions and habits in the great mass, while they would not make the middle and higher classes more wealthy and happy, would only tend to promote poverty and unhappiness among the lower ranks of society.



## CHAPTER VII.

HAS THE NATURAL PROPORTION, WHICH SUBSISTENCE BEARS TO POPULATION IN ITS INCREASE, A TENDENCY TO CHECK THE PROGRESS OF THE LATTER IN WEALTH?

WE have seen that the increase of population has naturally a wealth-increasing influence. This is found to be universally true. And yet it has been denied by some, at least, partially.

Mr. Malthus has broached a peculiar notion on the increase of population. "The constant effort in the population to increase beyond the means of subsistence," says he, "*as constantly tends to subject the lower classes of society to distress, and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition* \*."

This is perhaps the boldest specimen of theorising in direct opposition to facts, that I recollect to have met with in the whole extent of my inquiries. That such an opinion should be broached in the nineteenth century, and persisted in by any statistician after the mass of statistical facts in all branches of the science, which has been laid before us, in full deve-

\* Essay, vol. i. B. i. ch. 2. p. 25.

lopement, during the last thirty years, seems extraordinary. It shows either an extreme unacquaintance with the principles of circulation, its causes and effects, or an utter disregard of them. On subjects connected with enthusiasm, it is true, that such a defiance of facts should be hazarded, would not be matter for much astonishment. We are constantly finding something new of this sort to amuse us; and enthusiasm or fanaticism will fully account for all. But for a writer on the cool science of statistics to venture so boldly, was less to be expected. It is indeed only another, but it is a most striking example of the power of theory over the mind of a theorist which can so invert causes and so distort facts, as to make him see proofs of his theoretical imaginations in causes and facts that give them a direct negation.

It would be only to repeat what has been already stated so minutely, to go into these causes and results. The history of the increase of population in all ages and in all countries, proves the direct contrary. Not an example of its increase but joins to prove, that *there is a constant effort in that increase to place all ranks of population in a better state, with respect to both the necessities and superfluities of life, than before.* The improvement among all classes is distinctly visible on comparing

different rates of population, or taking any average of twenty or thirty years, or sometimes even ten. And the more rapid the increase, the more striking is the progress in the general improvement. The difference in this point between a very thin and very crowded rate, is infinite: for example, between the state of the various ranks in Britain about the time of Julius Cæsar, or even at the Conquest, and that in the reign of George the Third. Indeed the difference in the melioration of condition among the lower ranks of Britons, in all respects, except the effects arising not from want or poverty, but from abundance and wealth, since the close of the American war, is surprising. The progress is so notorious, that it is now a trite saying in the mouths of many persons of the lower classes, that a peasant now-a-days enjoys more comforts and is better educated, than the squire and other rich men some hundreds of years ago.

The history of Europe during the last three centuries, in which, with some exceptions (the state of which, by the way, confirms the observation), its population has made so rapid a progress, proves and exemplifies this in the most pleasing manner. The progress of improvement in the condition of all ranks, has fully kept pace with the increase of the numbers. Those nations which have peopled slowest,

have made the least progress in improvement, and in those that have increased fastest, the condition of the lower ranks, *ceteris paribus*, has been most improved. Indeed, the condition of all classes has shared in the beneficial effect, and of none more than that of cultivators, farmers as well as labourers. The increase of population will at length, and probably ere long, explode even the serf system in Russia. The various ranks, it is true, have kept pretty much their respective distances, but all have risen.

The histories of districts or countries, that have either remained stationary or decreased in population, prove the same thing in another way. In the former, the circumstances of the lower ranks have experienced little or no improvement: in the latter, their conditions have grown worse.

In sum, it is to the increase of population, and to the augmentation of employment and wealth, the superior cultivation of mind, the extension of liberty and a more comfortable style of living, which this increase necessarily produces, that the amelioration in the condition of the lower classes generally throughout Europe, is chiefly, if not wholly, either directly or indirectly, to be attributed. And it is only to this increase, that they have to look forward for

a farther progress in ameliorating their condition.

Let us now examine what is adduced by Mr. Makthus to set aside all this mass of uniform facts.

He reckons that the tendency, which he assumes in population, to increase faster than subsistence, operates by means of a diminution of employment and wealth, arising from this circumstance in nature \*, to check the progress of improvement. Is there any such result actually produced in nature? And if there be, what is the process by which it is effected?

The necessary tendency of a scantiness of subsistence, as of any other article, according to the *natural* laws of circulation, is to increase the price of it. And this rise is generally much higher than the real deficiency would warrant. Nothing but the strictest maximum imposed by government can prevent its taking place. Indeed, this effect is produced so strongly by a deficiency, or a supposed deficiency, of corn, that perhaps, in few other articles, except some trifling ones of luxury, is this law of circulation seen so strikingly operating. This arises from the greater necessity of the article. And in all cases of a deficiency of grain, for example, whether real or imagined; the cry among the lower ranks is for govern-

\* Essay, vol. i. B. i. ch. 2. p. 26. and *passim*.

ment to interfere with its positive maximum against the operation of this natural law.

The average result then of this supposed natural deficiency in subsistence would be to keep this species of article at a rate of price much higher than a fair average one. No such result does take place generally ; but, as in the case of all other articles, it does occasionally and partially occur. Of this we have had several strong proofs within the last twenty years.

Were it, however, to take place generally, the result would be what it is found to be when it does actually happen, or the reverse of what Mr. Malthus supposes. The stimulus which it created through the medium of the rise in the price of the various articles of food, (which would be extremely high,) would greatly enlarge the income and capital of the cultivator, and enable his class to give more than the fair quantum of employment to others. There would be a palpable tendency in agriculture to attract fresh hands to it. This would increase the proportion of circulators withdrawn from the other classes, and by augmenting the buyers from them, render them, of course, more extensive suppliers. The influence of the cultivator's prices would also be communicated as usual to the prices of other classes. These would more than reimburse themselves. A

general increase in employment, and wealth would thus necessarily be the result.

Were it possible, according to the laws of circulation, that a permanent rise in the prices of the cultivator could take place without producing a somewhat corresponding rise in those of other classes (fixed annuitants, it is scarcely necessary to observe, are always excepted here), still an increase of national poverty would not be the result to a district or a country. It would be at the worst a mere transfer case with respect to classes. What the other circulators had lost in wealth and the means of giving employment, the cultivating would have gained. The quantity of employment and wealth would have been at least, as before. But no such result can possibly take place naturally for any length of time. It could only be the effect of some absurd restrictions of a despotic government.

But if from the abundance of subsistence the price were to fall, would not the lower price tend to induce more members of the working classes at least, to marry? Yes, it would have this effect, provided the fall in the price of this necessary be not attended with a diminution of employment, or a fall in the price of labour. In the latter case the fall in the price of subsistence might even operate against marriage, as in the extremely produc-

the year 1815. The very abundance of this year proved a source of distress and ruin to the farmer, and of starvation to labourers and others. This is the uniform language of those who reported concerning the results of the abundance of that year. "The labouring classes are also much distressed," says the Reporter for Pifeshire, "in a great measure owing to the farmer being unable to carry on any improvement whatever: neither does it appear, that the manufacturers were at all benefited by the unnatural depression of the price of grain, crops 1814 and 1815, but the very reverse &c." And the Reporter for the manufacturing county of Dorset expresses himself still more strongly. "The mechanics, in our towns, again, say, that the demand for their labour is so very much reduced, that they must make the most they can of what is left, to keep them alive. They have been buying meat by pounds and ounces, which never happened when it was three shillings or even four shillings a peck, and are literally starving amidst abundance &c." A fine picture by the way from facts on a low price.

According to the real principles of circulation, it is a superabundance in the supply of

\* Farmer's Magazine, November 1816, p. 491.

† *Id.* May 1816, p. 249.



food as of other articles, that diminishes the stimulus on industry and the other circulatory powers, and produces depression, and not a tendency to deficiency, as Mr. Malthus imagines. This, on the contrary, always creates additional stimulus, and except in some temporary excessive cases, uniformly increases income and wealth. A constant superabundance of food, or an average amount of subsistence exceeding that required by the actual population, or what is equivalent, a proportion of cultivators beyond what the number of demanders renders sufficient to adjust the supply to the demand; were such a thing possible, would, like a superabundance of manufactures, houses, &c. injure both the suppliers and demanders, produce a perpetual depression, and operate uniformly against marriage.

In all these cases, with respect to subsistence as well as other articles, the price is ~~not~~ combined with the quantity produced. A larger quantity with a lower price, may diminish the income of the farmer, and consequently his means of reproducing employment; and thus as far as depends upon him, wages will fall. On the other hand, a smaller quantity with a higher price may enable him to obtain a larger income. He will thus be able to create more employment, and give better prices. The greater quantity of subsistence, in the former

time, will operate against income and marriage, and the smaller quantity, in the latter, will operate in favour of both.

It is thus also clear, that whatever influence subsistence has, it has only in common with other species of circumscribed. There is nothing in the least peculiar in it, or essentially regulative, distinct from that of those other species, or drawn from any natural tendency in it to increase slower than population. It operates in producing wealth merely like them, as being a medium of employment and price, and its influence must be, speaking generally, in the proportion which it bears to other articles in price, or according to Mr. Gray's scale, on the average of British consumption to the amount of about thirty per cent.

Mr. Malthus's general principles have been shown to be so contrary to those operating universally in real life, that it seems unnecessary to go into the application of them to particular districts. I may quote one by way of illustration.

Yus. Other circumstances being the same, it may be affirmed that countries are populous according to the quantity of human food which they produce or can import. But their happiness does not depend either upon their being born or their dying.

\* Hedges and Stiles, B. N. Chap. 461.

think *on* fully inhabited, upon their poverty or their riches, their youth or their age; but, *on* the proportion which the population and the food bear to each other. This proportion is generally the most favourable in new colonies where the knowledge and industry of an old state operate on the fertile unappropriated land of a new one. And it has appeared, that the poor and thinly inhabited tracts of the Scotch Highlands are more distressed by a redundant population than the most populous parts of Europe.”

Now what is the real fact with respect to the proportion between the food and the population in the distressed Highlands, the district selected out of all Europe to show the distress arising from a redundancy of population in proportion to food? If we except some of our highly improved most agricultural districts, of no great extent, there is not a portion of the British empire, and I will venture to say, there is not a district of such extent in Europe, that produces a greater quantity of surplus food, in proportion to its population than this very district selected for a contrary proportion. I know not that any new colony, not even among those in the newly cleared districts of North America, produces so much in proportion to their population as the Highlands of Scotland. The mountain straths, lochs and narrow seas of our high-famed

inhabitants of the North, who have done and suffered so much for the establishment of the liberty of the continent, as well as for the security and glory of their native island, send annually to other more populous districts and countries as much surplus subsistence in the form of cattle, sheep and fish, as would feed at least an amount of population, I think I am warranted in asserting, fully equal to the resident. Some portions of this mountainous region, it is true, draw on their neighbours for corn; but the universal appropriation of grain, through all its modes, to the production of the favourite but injurious spirit whisky, show a surplus quantity even of that species of subsistence, and to demand for more food.

If then these Highlanders be distressed, or sink from a redundancy of population, it is from some other cause, than the deficiency of the proportion of the food, which they annually receive from the hands of nature and of industry.

Their population is indeed redundant; but why? Not from the proportion of the food supplied. That, by the way, population can always regulate whether in the Highlands or out of them. But because, from natural and artificial circumstances, their population is so thin, and therefore poor and unemployed. It is prolific but it does not accumulate. A

great portion of its new members actually emigrate, but not from a want of subsistence supplied by nature and industry. The farmers and fishers among them procure such a superabundance of that, they are forced to send it to other districts to be consumed. Our skilled mountaineers emigrate because, from the thinness of their population, they have not employment on the means of income sufficient, or at least, because they see better prospects of attaining to full employment and a larger income in more populous districts and countries, particularly England, though the proportion of the food of these to the population be much smaller, than in their own.

As this immense tract of mountains and straths becomes more populous, and their towns, of course, increase, the Highlanders find, (and they will continue to find) the resident mouths approaching nearer to the amount of estates which they produce, but while this disproportion decreases they perceive that, in a ratio quite the inverse of what is imagined by Mr. Malthus, their proportion is becoming less redundant. And the thicker it does grow, the less redundant will it be found to be. They can employ more hands at home. And the more they employ at home, the richer and more luxurious will their various classes become, till at length, in spite of their improve-

mounts in pasturing sheep, their mountains and straths will have such an increasing demand on them from the resident mouths, that they will have much less, if any, surplus substance to send to those of the lowlands.

Mr. Malthus, in asserting the Highlands of Scotland for an eminent proof of his frequent but fanciful notion respecting the proportion of food to population, is thus an unfortunate as usual in his appeal to facts. Their history is decisive against the subsistence theory, only for the population.

He recapitulate: The increase of population extends the old sources of wealth, and creates new, by augmenting and multiplying the wants of the great mass, and enabling this body more easily to obtain what they want. It produces new classes; and thus continues to enlarge the average demand. It raises gradually the general rate of price; that is, in fact, the incomes of the various classes. Nor is the increase of wealth, arising from the increase of population, according to the old proportion per individual, but keeps augmenting according to a proportion which seems to grow larger, as the population becomes more extended, and the increase of numbers is more rapid. On the other hand, the decrease of population invariably causes a depression by lessening the stimulus on the circulatory powers, and pro-

duces poverty. Every circumstance, whether natural or artificial, which tends to check the accumulation of population, uniformly tends, as far as it proves effective, to check the progress of wealth. All districts and countries that labour under a natural or artificial checking of population, exemplify this. In sum, though the increase of population, by means of the increased facility which it gives in obtaining larger incomes at an earlier age, renders circulators less provident and frugal in their habits, and has a tendency rather to augment the number of the vicious poor, it uniformly makes the great body richer.

The two leading doctrines of the Happiness of States on this subject, seem thus clearly established: 1, that *"the increase of population is the great, indeed the sole, original cause of the permanent increase of wealth."* And 2, that *"every increase in the number of circulators necessarily tends to increase it, and not merely according to the average quantity of the former dividend, but also according to a new average quantity, which is augmented in proportion to the new numbers."* The latter is evidently the real result of the former in actual circulation. A wealth-augmenting influence in the increase of population is thus a clear principle of nature.

\* B. ii. ch. 10. p. 125.

† Ib. ch. 2. p. 26. †

## BOOK V.

### SOME PRACTICAL TOPICS, INCLUDING THE EFFECTS OF THE TWO THEORIES.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### THE GENERAL RESULT OF THE INCREASE OF POPULATION WITH RESPECT TO HEALTH.

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We have examined the results of the increase of population with regard to those eminent portions of the means of happiness, subsistence, employment and wealth. There is another most important division of those means, and not less interesting than any of these. It is health.

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According to Mr. Gray, the diseases and evils generated by the increase of population, are chiefly those which spring from luxury, or an excess of subsistence, and from riches. On the other hand, Mr. Malthus seems to maintain, that the predominant diseases and evils generated by the increase of population are chiefly those springing from a scarcity of food and from poverty.

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As to general health, it probably may admit of a doubt whether this be materially improved by an increase of population. A thick population has unquestionably many advantages, in regard to medical treatment and to comforts in sickness, over population in a thin scattered state. The condition of persons labouring under disease, or injured by accidents, in the thinner states, is truly deplorable: while even the poorest persons in a highly populous country, as in Britain, have in their power means of comfort and attention, as well as of cure, in infirmaries and hospitals, which the richest and highest persons in the thinner states cannot obtain. On the other hand, the various employments of the sedentary cast and of other descriptions, injurious to health, introduced, indeed created by the wealth and luxury which spring from the increase of population, perhaps make disease more extensive. At the same time, by enervating the human body as well as mind, they render both less capable of withstanding the attacks of disease. There are certain maladies, which are common to all states of population. Such are the regular diseases of children, and fever, consumption, &c. Some of these are more destructive in the thinner, and some in the more crowded states. The small pox, for example, in the thinly peopled and less civilized districts.

is frequently as destructive as the plague itself. In the more populous and civilized, it is, or may be, rendered comparatively harmless. Fevers and consumption, I apprehend, are more prevalent in the more populous and better fed districts. The plague, which is so dreadful in thinly peopled, or imperfectly civilized regions, seems capable of being completely prevented by the civilization, cleanliness, and prudent conduct, which are uniformly found to attend the increase of population; when the natural influence of this is not counteracted by the effects of despotism, or the notions of a false religion.

It seems very evident, however, that the diseases most predominant in the thinnest states of population, are those which arise from poverty and deficiency of comfort; and, in the more crowded states of population, those which spring from a superfluity of the good things of life, or from luxury.

If we read history, or attend to the traveller, or if we survey the world for ourselves, we find that it is in thinly peopled districts, where the people are wretchedly poor, and where they suffer frequently from a scarcity of subsistence. To quote examples is superfluous. We cannot mention any thinly inhabited district, where population is either stationary or slow in its increase, which is not a proof of it. Even our

own island affords striking examples. Which are the districts that have suffered principally from a deficiency of food? Are they the most or the least populous? Are they not the extensive counties of the Highlands? Nor did this arise from a real scarcity of subsistence; for even in these years, when provisions were most scarce among the residents, these counties supported abundance of cattle and fish. But from the thinness of the population there was such a deficiency of employment, and such a consequent general poverty, that when provisions came to be dearer than usual, the people had not the means of purchasing them in due quantity, particularly in the more expensive form of cattle. These were, therefore, sent away to feed those who were able to pay for them, or better employed and richer circulators.

The observations of Dr. Adam Smith on the mortality of children in the Highlands, are by no means warranted by the registers. The fact, that the resident population of the Highland counties is increasing considerably, while there is an excessive emigration annually taking place, is a clear proof of the contrary†. And I do not think, that I have found, in any of my tours, a finer, more robust, healthy-looking, and numerous stock

• Wealth of Nations, vol. i. ch. 8. p. 107.

† Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 436.

of children, of all ages up to puberty, than I have met with in the Highlands.

The effects of luxury or an excessive use of food and liquors, co-operating with unhealthy employments, in very populous districts, are seen in the size of the people, and their cast and colour of countenance. In those districts where manufactures have been introduced and towns have greatly increased in the number of persons living, I have been informed, that old people perceive a striking reduction both in height and breadth. In some districts those persons say, the average height of the residents of certain towns have been reduced two or three inches. And it is certain that in manufacturing districts and very large towns, the native inhabitants are in general by no means so tall or stout as in the agricultural, or in small towns and villages. Compare for example, the native residents of the city of London, with the inhabitants of Hereckshire and Northumberland, and they scarcely seem people of the same tribe or nation. I should conceive there must be a difference of at least four inches in height between the general stature of the two. A similar difference exists in the robustness of the make. There are many large men in our populous towns, but they are fat, rather than robust. They give us the idea of nine

without strength, or rather of mere bulk with positive imbecility.

The colour and form of the face agree in pointing out the same difference resulting from luxury and frugal fare. The sallow pallidness and hectic cast of face, so common among the native residents of our large towns, both male and female; and the brown or sordid complexions and coarser make of face that abound in our thinly peopled districts, are most strikingly characteristic of the general styles of living. The former exhibit the hue and most established disease of the latter, of fixed health. There are many rosy countenances in towns, but far from showing active vitality, this redness appears to be rather the diagnostic of gout, fever, and apoplexy. Occasionally, it is true, from a deficiency of employment caused by certain circumstances, the diseases prevailing for the time in populous and rich countries, indicate a lower style of living than usual. In these cases the greatness of the change, from a too high style to one too low, produces injurious effects. But the generally predominant diseases in thinly peopled and populous districts point out a too sedentary style of living as a leading cause in the former, and luxury and a superfluous use of food and liquors, a leading cause in the latter. The terrible host of *nervous disorders*, as they are

called in the mass, some of which were scarcely known to our ancestors in the thinly-peopled times, and which keeps increasing in our more populous towns; and districts, is both proof and example of the vast and universal influence of an intemperate use of foods. They may be called the diseases of luxury.

Mr. Gray's general observations on this subject seem fully warranted. "Much has been said by theorists of the depopulating effects of an insufficiency of subsistence. But what is the real fact? If we exclude famines, either produced by the seasons, or the villany of men, the number that dies from an insufficient quantity of food is but trifling. Perhaps in the whole extent of Great Britain not two hundred die of actual starvation in a year; and perhaps not two thousand have their lives shortened by an insufficiency of food. What is this effect on population to what is produced on it by a superfluity? Besides the thousands that are annually prevented from coming into existence by the defecundating influence of abundance, how many thousands actually die every year from it, and how many tens of thousands have the natural extent of their lives shortened by its slow poison?"

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\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 4. p. 460.

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## CHAPTER II.

THE RESULT OF EARLY MARRIAGE, AS TO  
VIRTUE.

THE maintainers of the antipopulation theory have of late contended, that government ought to check, instead of encouraging a national practice of early marriage. This doctrine has met with abettors among our country gentlemen, justices and magistrates. It has, therefore, become a matter of serious practical importance to ascertain how far it is well founded; and to settle the question, *whether government should encourage, or check, early marriage among the lower ranks.*

It will be necessary, in the discussion of this question, to institute a comparison between early and late marriage, as to their general results to a nation, with respect to the three grand points, virtue, happiness and wealth. It is true, that wealth is the point, on which the opponents of early marriage rest their cases; but the other points are of more vital importance. The sound statisticians will admit, that though early marriage promoted the increase of wealth, if it tended to injure morality, it ought to be checked.

But with respect to virtue there can scarcely be a question as to the influence of early marriage. It is as favourable to the progress of every sort of virtue, as late marriage is unfavourable to it.

The habits naturally, if not necessarily, arising from marriage, and the prospect and cares of a family, particularly among young people, are all in favour of morality. It begets prudence, (which alone is the source of almost every virtue,) temperance, correctness of manners, and a due attention towards promoting our future progress by industry, diligence, steadiness and frugality. It cherishes friendliness, sympathy for others, benevolence and even generosity.

On the other hand, the habits naturally arising from bachelordom are very much the reverse of all these. It gives rise to licentiousness in love, with all the vices which spring from this fertile source of dissipation and immorality; to irregularity, unsteadiness, incorrect manners; and unless when the bachelor's mind has a predisposition to a narrow selfishness, to imprudence in all its forms and with all its bad concomitants.

It may be fairly affirmed, that the earlier the common period of marrying is in a nation, the more likely is that nation to be virtuous, and prudent, and to be correct in its manners:



and the later the period; the more generally will vice, licentiousness, extravagance and impure manners prevail.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE RESULT OF EARLY MARRIAGE; AS TO HAPPINESS.

THE increase of population may be the great, indeed the sole original cause of the permanent increase of wealth; and yet the question whether government should encourage early marriage may not be immediately answered in the affirmative. For it may be favourable to a nation's wealth, and yet injurious to a nation's happiness.

If, for example, the result of early marriage, a rapid increase of population, should deprive the great body of the people of a due quantity of food and comforts, the greater wealth arising from it would not be sufficient to justify the encouraging such a national practice. Happiness, and not wealth, is the genuine object of a wise nation's measures.

A greater amount of wealth cannot always create a greater amount even of the superfluities of life, and we can conceive circum-

stances, when wealth cannot procure a due quantity of food. The former may be dispensed with occasionally without much injury to the happiness of individuals; but the latter are as indispensably necessary to happiness, as to existence. Wealth can procure corn, meat, and water, when the means of producing these are supplied by nature, but no amount of wealth can create the least additional particle of these, unless those means are in its power.

This is fully admitted. But while the means of additional subsistence are supplied by nature, and this will be the fact until those means in store are fully exhausted by population, if ever such a period shall arrive, the greater the average amount of wealth, as it has been amply shown, the more will circulators of all ranks be enabled to obtain a full and steady supply of the various kinds of food, whether necessary or luxurious.

In comparing matrimony with the single state as to happiness, a family forms the most prominent object of consideration.

A family is one of the leading means of human happiness. In this point of view children are certainly regarded by the great mass of mankind.

The expense created by them to a circulator is not a drawback upon his happiness, but the medium of a solid addition to it, like

any of the other real sources of enjoyment. What the bachelor expends on himself, we shall suppose in superfluities of eating and clothing, and perhaps on some impure connexion, the husband expends in feeding and clothing his children. But is the latter more unhappy because he shares his income with a wife and family? The very act of sharing with them produces enjoyment, which no selfish gratification could afford him. When he looks round his table and sees his wife and little folks eating the earnings of his labours, what though his fare should be a little homelier, but even this is not always the case? Does he not receive infinitely more pleasure from beholding the enjoyment of the party, and considering himself the author of it, than he could from some superfluities, which, in most cases, would only tend to vitiate his stomach, and render him less capable of enjoying the pleasures of the table? Does he not, to use the expression, eat with so many mouths? What has the solitary bachelor to bring into comparison with this? Or does not the husband receive much more real pleasure from seeing his wife and children dressed tidily from his labours, than he could from having a superfluity of fine clothes himself? A family is, in fact, in a great majority of cases, a mean of multiplying a man's happiness.

True, a family is also a source of anxiety and many cares; but these are all of such a nature, as, by creating an intense interest, to give a keener poignancy to existence. It has been observed, that if matrimony has many cares, bachelordom has few pleasures. At any rate, if we take in all the peculiar advantages and disadvantages of the married and single state, is the latter, even on the whole, preferable? Let us look round among the various classes, and do we find that the single either seem happier than the married, or have a fonder regard for life? It has been remarked, that *the greater number of suicides are bachelors*. And it is stated, that during the revolutionary times instances of suicide multiplied in France, as marriage became less common.

But I forbear at present from going into a more minute comparison of the married and single states in point of happiness, as our opponents of early marriage do not object to it on this ground. I believe, such is the instinct of our nature, and such the general prospects held out by the single and married states, that *no person ever remains single, but either from a peculiarity of temper, a bad condition of health, or some impediment that prevents him or her from choosing what seems the best and most natural choice.*

## CHAPTER IV.

THE RESULT OF EARLY MARRIAGE, AS TO  
WEALTH.

FROM the points, virtue and happiness, we now proceed to the comparison between early and late marriage, with respect to what I fear too many reckon the most important consideration of all, or wealth. It is this on which our subsistence theorists lay so much stress.

It has been argued by Sir James Steuart, Mr. Arthur Young, Mr. Malthus and others, who seem unfriendly to the increase of population, that early marriage tends to render the individual poorer, and to increase the evils arising from want among families.

Were it even the fact, that individuals were rendered poorer, while the community was rendered richer by the results of early marriage, for the latter proposition has been so completely demonstrated, that I consider it in the light of an axiom in statistics, still it would be wise in government, which acts rather for the community than the individual, to encourage early marriage as tending to enrich the great body of the people.

It should be attended to here, that with

respect to particular results, we are all very liable to be deceived from viewing them partially, or from not being aware of, or taking into consideration the whole of the influences producing them and springing from them. But with respect to general results, the candid statistician cannot well mistake. The various effects arising from the stimulating influences, corrected by the counteracting, in all their extent, are here seen upon so large a scale and in so distinct a manner, that he has only to look about honestly, and decide impartially, to be right. If therefore he find any particular result that seems to be at variance with the general, he will be disposed to look on it as a doubtful case, and to endeavour to reconcile the former to the latter. He will not allow the exception to come in the place of the general rule.

Now how is it possible, according to the arrangements of nature, and the laws of statistics arising out of them, that early marriage, which, by increasing population, tends necessarily to render the great mass of the community richer, should render the individuals uniformly, or even generally poorer? The opinion of these enemies to early marriage springs, like all the other notions of the subsistence theory, from taking only a partial, as well as a very superficial, view of the subject.

Their reasoning is indeed arithmetically exact on their partial view.

If a man receive the same wages as a bachelor, which another receives as the father of five young children, or if, again, a man and woman marry at an age when six or eight children will very likely be the produce of their union, while another pair comes together at a period when that produce will amount to only three or four, while both pairs receive the same wages, I admit the result will be generally as they say. I agree with Mr. Malthus, and all the other declaimers against early marriage at present, whether among our political economists or our country justices, that there is nothing more certain in Euclid, or clearer in Cocker, than that, *ceteris paribus*, the bachelor will be richer than the father with five children; and that the early marrying pair, with a family of eight, will be poorer than the late marrying pair with four. But, the statistician will perceive, that this is a very imperfect statement of the case, and that a much more comprehensive view is to be taken of the subject than either these economists or justices appear to dream of, before he can decide upon the question. He will *a priori* be disposed to conjecture, that however much the results of the doctrines of theorists may be at variance with themselves, the various results of nature will

be found not contradictory, but perfectly harmonious.

In this view is left out the essential circumstance; the wealth-producing influence of the increase of population. The uniform result of this is to place the great body of circulators in a better condition than before. But how can this result take place except from a general practice of early marriage? Were population to decrease, or even to remain stationary, by the general adoption of a later period of marrying, the married pairs would have fewer children, on the average, but they would have a more than proportionately smaller amount of exchangeable wealth to maintain them. The means of employment, and consequently of income, would be less extensive. Besides, the rate of wages would be inferior; for this rate depends on the wants of the great mass of the circulators in the various classes. And these wants will be increased by an average larger number of children among the circulators. The expenses of a family form a necessary part in the charges of a class. And the more numerous the family, the higher on the average will be the charge.

It is true, that if a circulator has a number of children beyond the average, he will, *ceteris paribus*, be worse off from this circumstance. He will receive only the average rate of wages



or profits, and he has more than an average demand on him for housekeeping. Many cases of this kind must occur constantly in all classes. But with respect to the community it is at worst only a transfer case. The father may be pinched or have less in his power to save, but the other circulators are not the worse for this. The farmer, clothier, &c. have at least the same amount of employment from him, as from others, or as from himself when his family was smaller, though the amount is divided among a larger number in his house.

There is, however, also to be added to this, that these extra additional circulators necessarily at length create additional stimulus, and thus ultimately augment the average amount of employment.

But besides, the more rapidly population increases, the greater is the average demand for hands. In all districts that are populous, or in which population increases, the means of employing young persons are more extensive, than in thinner peopled districts, or those whose population is stationary, and still more where it is decreasing. In very thin districts children can scarcely be employed at all. In very crowded districts there is a demand for them in one mode or another, as soon as they can do any thing. In the former, large families of children are a burden to the circulators;

in the latter, they increase the income of the family. In these populous districts prudent parents consider children as a source of wealth. Indeed one of the evils of a crowded population is its tendency to employ children too early either for health or for virtue. In great towns and crowded districts, we find children of the lower ranks regularly employed at five or six years of age.

On a survey of all classes, *are the married members, on the whole, poorer?* I conceive the reverse will be found to be the average result. Indeed the prudent habits, which marriage and a family are calculated so strongly to create, render this result almost certain.

A lady who lives in the suburbs of London, noticed to me the case of two jobbing gardeners, whom she occasionally employed. They were both married, but the one had, I think, five children, and the other none. The father was, at all times decently clothed; his cottage was, to use her expression, quite a picture of cleanliness, comfort and plenty. His wife and children came to church dressed as tidily as any of their rank in the parish. All about this man bore the marks of a degree of affluence. The other seemed to be alike industrious, and received the same wages for his labour; yet himself, his wife and his house, presented, in picture, quite the reverse of the former. He

was always in rags himself: his wife and his house were equally untidy, dirty, and shabby-looking. Nor was there any appearance of good living to account for this. All about him seemed poverty-struck, and exhibited the marks of starvation and distress. This contrast will bring many similar ones to the recollection of us all.

If early marriage were calculated to produce poverty among individuals, how is the greater average wealth of a community, which uniformly, without an exception, springs from the increase of population and a thicker rate of it, produced? Suppose a district containing one million of individuals, that divided say six millions sterling, or on an average six pounds each, should have its population increased at length to two millions, and that it now divided fourteen millions, or seven pounds each: how is it possible that this could happen, unless the great mass of families on an average shared more than in the former case? Exceptions in all classes would exist in the latter state of population as in the former case; but the great mass of all classes would be better off in the latter. Their incomes must of necessity be on the average larger.

"If in the Highlands of Scotland," says Mr. Malthus, "for the next ten or twelve years, the marriages were to be either more

frequent or more prolific, and no emigration were to take place, instead of five to a cottage, there might be seven; and this, added to the necessity of worse living, would evidently have a most unfavourable effect on the health of the common people \*."

Here, as usual, he leaves out of his consideration the increase of employment and of wealth, which is uniformly derived from an accumulation of population. In these very Highlands I have seen of late, in my tours, the most pleasing answer given to such theoretical fancies by actual facts. In proportion as population is accumulating there, that poverty, which is the result of the deficiency of employment springing from thinness of population, is giving way.

The tidy cottages of the Highland peasants and the better clothing of their children, which are contrasted with the wretched hovels of other days, out of which I have seen ten or a dozen sturdy but idle children swarm, in those straths where population is increasing, show what population can do even amid heathy mountains! It is emigration, that keeps these brave mountaineers unemployed and poor. In those districts, where population is making any accumulation, the residents, far from being ren-

\* Essay, vol. ii. B. ii. ch. 12. p. 188.

dered poorer or more idle by it, are getting more employment and reaching a better income, and the cottage is gradually expelling the hovel.

The Highland children have been charged with an inveterate disposition to idleness, but on what ground? They are idle, because, from the thinness of the population and the consequent smallness of its wants, they have not the means of employment. When they descend to the Lowlands, they are found to be active, industrious and enterprising. But brought up in the filth and sloth of a wretched hovel, with no profitable mode of employment to tempt them to exert themselves, or employed chiefly in the very idle trade of tending sheep or cattle, and trusting to their dogs, it is no wonder they become in a manner torpid, in spite of all their native fire. But as population accumulates, and employment is varied, these indolent habits are shaken off even amid their own straths and glens; and as it continues to accumulate throughout these, emigration will abate, and their activity and comforts will increase in a corresponding proportion.

The notions of the opponents of early marriage are founded on similar partial views, as the imaginations of the multitude respecting low prices. Ask any individual of that mass, and he will tell you, that the prices of his own

class are rather too low, but he will insinuate that the prices of other classes are too high. He does not take into his view that he is speaking here as a buyer only. It would no doubt be better for him and his class to have their rate of prices high, and the rate of all other classes low; but in such a case how is he to get paid? How can the other classes continue to employ his, unless they charge at a corresponding rate? In fact, unless their average prices be high, his cannot be high. The price of every class must rise or sink ultimately to the level of the rates of other classes.

Our antipopulationists argue in a similar partial manner with respect to married pairs, and the circulators who live single. They do not consider the subject completely round its circle. They claim the advantage of the *effect*; but they reject, or seem disposed to weaken the *cause*. *Cæteris paribus*, no doubt the single person would be richer than the married man with a family. But families are the grand source of employment and wealth; and the larger the average of their numbers individually, the more copious is this source. *How then could even single persons obtain the same quantity of employment, or enjoy the same means of accumulating wealth, from a diminished source of both; that is, from a smaller average rate of number per family?*

Such a result is impossible; and the contrary is uniformly the real one. Though individual married pairs, from having families beyond the average generally charged for, may be occasionally made poorer, yet the actual result of the larger average of the number of a family, is a greater average amount of employment and wealth to the mass of individual families, as to the community at large.

In this case, when the subject is properly analyzed, we see, as usual, the benevolence of nature's arrangements. In proportion as the classes are poorer and more populous, the community depends more upon the increase of their numbers. They produce more children per family on the average, but, of themselves, they are less able to maintain them. And to these classes, children, from the abundance and variety of employment presented to them by populousness and the increase of population, prove a source of additional income. As, again, the classes grow less populous and richer, from the temper of the classes, their children, though less numerous per family, become more of the transfer description of circulators, particularly the females. They are drawbacks on their parents' income, and very generally take from it, but seldom choose to put themselves in the way of adding to it, like those of the lower ranks. Whatever our subsistence theorists, or

the enemies of early marriage may imagine, the more populous the society and the more rapid the increase of population, the more generally will the old English saying be still, and ever, found to be just; that, *if children be the rich man's poverty, they are the poor man's wealth.*

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## CHAPTER V.

SHOULD A GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGE OR CHECK  
EARLY MARRIAGE AMONG ITS PEOPLE?

CERTAIN objects have more weight with government, than with individuals. In considering the question, whether it should encourage early marriage or not, it will reckon the additional strength gained by a country, to maintain its rights against its neighbours, as well as the addition to its respectability and influence by the increase of its people, as very strong arguments on the side of cherishing the grand source of that increase. The influence, which the increase of population has in rendering the whole mass more civilized and, of course, more friendly to internal tranquillity, and more submissive to the authority of law, will afford it another powerful argument on the same side. If to all this be added, that the increase of population



is the original source of the permanent increase of wealth, that it is continually creating a larger average amount of employment and income among all classes, that it renders the various supplies required by society more steady, regular and certain, and by all these effects puts a greater amount of the means of happiness in the power of all ranks, (whether they improve or neglect these,) the answer to the question proposed must be instantly given in the affirmative. To check early marriage, or diminish the source of so many of the means of happiness, as some have proposed, would show the height of folly, as to promote it is a measure of the soundest practical wisdom.

To encourage early marriage is useful in a farther point of view. It weakens the injurious competition on the part of the single. The practice of it among the working and middle classes thus operates in favour of these classes, as well as of itself. It tends to raise the price of employment, for married circulators require more than those who are single. By diminishing the proportion of the latter, it succeeds in obtaining for all a better income. The increase in the demand, created by the increase of circulators, co-operates along with it. The result, which is a higher rate of wages, while it renders marriage more comfortable to those who have entered into it, at the same time tempts ba-

chelors to think seriously about that natural choice, by making it more a choice of prudence.

What then is the species of encouragement which an enlightened government should give to the practice of early marriage? Certain occasional circumstances, or certain local peculiarities will dictate the propriety of special modes of encouragement. But I do not conceive that in common circumstances or cases, there is much occasion for government interfering, as it were, to bribe the young to marry. The natural impulse towards marriage among all ranks, but especially the lower, on whom the increase of population so essentially depends, is in general of itself strong enough at a certain period of life, to bring the great body together in the connubial connexion, as soon as they can with prudence. All, therefore, that seems required from government and the inferior magistrates is, upon every occasion, to give early marriage their countenance. *Cæteris paribus*, preference should always be awarded to married men who have children. And in cases, where from misfortune or the circumstances of the time, families have fallen into distress, every measure that is practicable should be adopted to administer relief. On the other hand, all connected with authority, should be enjoined in no case to discountenance marriage, or throw any impediment in its way.

This, though of itself indirect, will frequently have a positive influence.

Farther than this I do not conceive, speaking generally, that encouragement is necessary. The circumstances of the year, or district, will do all the rest. When these are favourable, early marriage will flourish : when they are not, it will rather languish till times become more auspicious.

Man is a rational being, and he should act as such, as well as be treated as such. No constraint is intended. It is sufficient to have swept away the objections to early marriage, from a supposed tendency in population to overstock with respect to subsistence, employment and wealth ; and to have shown, that, according to the arrangements of nature, it tends to create a more abundant supply, to increase employment and wealth, and to promote virtue and happiness. All this has been established, as the system of nature, on the clearest facts. The individual is thus at full liberty to obey the dictates of nature and of reason ; *and, by choosing to marry early, he necessarily benefits his country and mankind.*

In general also, early marriage will equally tend to the advantage of the individual. The earlier the honourable connexion takes place, when prudence assents, the better will it be for health, for virtue, for success in life, for hap-

piness. But the circumstances of the individual require individual consideration. The general result to society is not, of itself, a sufficient motive in this case for him, or her. All should consult their own feelings, consider their own temper and circumstances, look forward like thinking beings and act to the best of their judgment. Their happiness is of more value to them than the wealth of the community. *To marry as early as is consistent with prudence, will be the choice of the wise man.*

What is required of the community, is as far as it is in its power, to correct those evils which may and will arise out of the choice of early marriage, in certain cases. This choice is always in favour of the community; but from imprudence, or even from misfortunes which perhaps prudence could neither foresee nor prevent, it in various cases proves a source of disadvantage to the individual. The community, therefore, which uniformly derives advantage from the increase of population, *should draw upon that wealth which springs from it, to relieve the sufferers.*

To check early marriage, as some recommend, because many individuals from imprudence or misfortune may be reduced to distress by it, is of that description of measures, which would sacrifice the whole to save the part. It is to destroy the source of general wealth, be-

cause it occasionally leads to individual poverty. The proportion of unfortunate cases would not be diminished by it, while all would be rendered less prosperous. It would be to labour to make all poor, in order to prevent a small portion from falling into misfortune.

In a few words, what government has chiefly to take care of is *the progress of population*. Let population increase, and all the rest that a good government wishes, will follow.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE TWO THEORIES.

HAVING now found, that the doctrines of the population theory, are completely supported in all their extent by the causes operating in real life and the results of these, while those of the subsistence are as completely contradicted by both; in other words, that the former is the theory of nature, it will be useful to take a general view of the practical consequences of the two theories.

The great object of all sound statistical measures, it has been maintained by Mr. Gray,

is *happiness*. This I conceive to be an axiom in statistics.

It is true, that wealth, or some other supposed advantage, has been generally considered the object of statistical measures. This is, however, to substitute a portion of the means for the end. All such secondary objects, unless when viewed in connexion with the grand object of all statistical measures, must be uncertain, and may occasionally mislead. Such, indeed, is the force of erroneous views, that an attempt to return to what is natural and correct, will be considered as something out of the way and as unpromising, by many. The more, however, the question is considered in all its extent, the more will statisticians be disposed to admit this leading principle of the Happiness of States; or that *it is the promotion of happiness, which is the grand object of good statistical measures, and of all sound politics.*

Wealth is unquestionably a most extensive mean of happiness, yet still it is only a mean; and to account it the grand object, as most statisticians do, is to exalt it to an unwarranted and dangerous height. It tends to narrow and debase the mind, and to produce a mercenary spirit as well as a petty mode of viewing things, which has frequently been injurious to the happiness of states.

This mere five per cent. principle, in spite of the applause and attention, which it has met with at all times, but particularly of late from our statisticians, if uncorrected, is even too mean for the counting-house. It is granted, that the leading object of the manufacturer, merchant, and other circulators, must be profit : for without profit they cannot go on, or produce the happiness which is the proper object of all. But our private circulators are too apt to make this their principle exclusively, while, in many cases, they would do better both for themselves and those whom they employ, were they to mix a little attention to principles of a nobler sort.

Private circulators, however, from their circumstances may be justified in cherishing the principle of gain as their main one, if they keep within moral bounds. But it should be a very secondary principle with legislators and government, who act for a nation. Their grand objects should be *to encourage population, and make that population virtuous, manly and happy.* Very different views will actuate wise ministers, than merely to promote only the employments which will produce so much per cent.

The per centage principle, if admitted, would indeed justify much that is base and abominable. "According to it, for example, the slave-trade was an excellent one and well worth

the encouragement of government, because a lucrative one.

This counting-house principle and spirit, have always had but too strong an influence with our senators and ministers. Indeed an enlightened senator or minister, in recommending a measure to parliament and the country, however noble and worthy of choice in other points, finds himself constrained to labour to show, that it comes with the assent of the five per cent. principle. All must be tried by the standard of loss and gain. This the people, if they thought justly, would perceive to be very mean and very contemptible. It is forcing liberal men to treat them in reality as a parliament and nation of mere chandlers, with whom wealth is every thing, and five per cent. or better the glory and happiness of man. It is degrading to a legislature: it is degrading to a country.

It has also prevented statesmen and legislators from carrying into execution many measures, which would tend to exalt the country and improve the people in it, because these, in the first instance, did not come recommended by the sanction of the five per cent. principle. Our statistical chandlers and others, therefore, would not approve, and most likely would have opposed. *Real improvement* with respect to happiness, in one form or another, is the stand-



ard of public measures. An enlightened statistician might well query, though he should set our country gentlemen and the money grubs of the Stock Exchange a-staring, whether it would not have been as well, if not better, for Great Britain, had an annual million been set apart for adorning the country and adding to its comforts, instead of for the purpose of raising the stocks, and thus by diminishing the profit on that great branch of capital, the monied, lessen the incomes of circulators, and the employment which they are capable of giving.

Indeed it could easily be shown that many measures in the power of government, which might produce no per centage at first, but rather a loss, may ultimately yield directly or indirectly much more than five per cent. We may quote for one example, building fishing villages in the Highlands, and supplying the villagers with all the implements for fishing. This might prove a doubtful speculation to private merchants, but to government it cannot fail to succeed, if persisted in. It will increase the hardy population of those remote districts, as well as the supply of food. Thus, though government might receive no direct return at all for the capital invested, the indirect returns would tend greatly to strengthen and enrich the country.

But I mean not to go farther into this inte-

resting subject at present. To employ merely with a view to obtain profit, is an object for private circulators; but the great object of government, as the agent for a nation, is to endeavour as far as in its power, to employ with a view to improve the mind, by encouraging manly and noble exertions, to adorn the country and exalt its character, and not so much to enable the people to guzzle more luxuriously, as to render them civilized, virtuous, healthy and happy.

We have frequently, however, seen our statesmen and legislators, inspired with views and feelings more becoming the dealers of chandler's shops, than the agents of an extensive community or a great country. We have seen them under the influence of this petty chandler's shop spirit quarrelling about contemptible trifles, and overlooking the grand sources of happiness. It is only by having the happiness of a state or mankind distinctly in view as the grand ultimate object, that this base mercenary spirit of the political pettifogger can be degraded from its influence, and the generous liberal spirit of the high-minded and sound politician substituted in its room. To make wealth the grand object, as it is of the present fashionable theories, as naturally tends to render the mind grovelling, its views narrow and its spirit petty, as to make happiness the

grand object, tends to elevate the mind, expand its views and ennoble its spirit.

The population theory co-operates fully with this great principle. It restores man to his real place, from which the subsistence theory would degrade him. It views him as what nature has made him, by endowing him with reason: the director and regulator of all that depends upon the will. Mind and reason, upon it, resume their proper rank and influence.

In obeying the dictates of nature and virtue a man promotes equally his own individual happiness and the happiness of society. The increase of population, which springs from the virtuous union between the sexes, tends to increase employment and diversify the modes of it, and so suit it more to the genius and capacity of the various individuals. It uniformly augments wealth, and, consequently, promotes all the advantages which spring from that extensive medium of happiness. And it operates also as the great promoter of civilization. In sum, upon this theory, early marriage, which is the natural choice of man, is not more favourable to virtue, than it is to the progress of civilization and of wealth.

It has an influence on the mind of the statistician equally tending to cherish benevolence with that of the productive theory. Each individual, in pursuing his own true happiness,

is seen to be promoting that of others. According to it, there are no checks in nature, which render what is really advantageous, on the whole, to an individual, a class or a country, disadvantageous to other individuals, classes or countries. In proportion as the grand principle of happiness is admitted as the proper object, and the productive and population theories are more fully understood in all their bearings, those interdicts, prohibitory imposts, and other narrow measures, which spring from the petty jealousies and narrow spirit fostered by other theories, will gradually disappear, or, at least, be greatly diminished, and those that remain will be considerably relaxed.

The productive theory *leads to an universal free commercial intercourse*; and the more generally it is received, the greater will be the approach to such an unshackled state of commerce. The population theory has the same bearing. There is no occasion for mincing this, though it would be vain, in the present state of statistical science, to expect the general reception of such a doctrine. As the world grows more full, there will in all probability be a gradual exploding of the old narrow ideas, and a tendency to a more generous and liberal system of commercial connexion.

A critic, as successful in ignorantly misconceiving, or willingly misrepresenting his

author, as ever played the part of a Reviewer, has charged Mr. Gray with considering the full complement of population as necessary to take place before a state can be pronounced happy. This is not the doctrine of the Happiness of States. According to that work, the increase of population uniformly extends the means of happiness, by increasing wealth and promoting civilization; and, consequently, the nearer a country reaches its full complement, these means will be put more extensively in the power of the great mass. But how does it follow from this, that the means of happiness are not in the power of population, till it reaches or nearly approaches such a state? Indeed Mr. Gray has more than insinuated, that, though the means of happiness are increased by an increase of population, it depended on the choice of population, whether it made the right or virtuous use of those means and was really happy. And according to his theory, there is a counter-tendency in the increase of population, arising out of the extension of luxury and sedentary employments, unfavourable to that eminent portion of the means of happiness, health.

The effects of the subsistence theory, on the other hand, are as injurious to society as those of the population are beneficial. It tends to promote vice, poverty, and misery, and is essentially injurious to benevolence, charity

and genuine philanthropy. Having shown it to be utterly unfounded in nature, and in all its results directly contrary to those of her actual arrangements, we may now, with honest freedom, speak the plain truth of it.

It is directly hostile to early marriage. The consequences of a national practice of late marriage would be dreadful in a moral point of view. The most dangerous period for a man and woman's virtue is between sixteen and thirty. During this period the sexual passions are at their height, while prudence has commonly but a feeble influence to counteract them. A general retardation of marriage would, therefore, lead to the most abandoned and dissolute conduct in love, with all the bad consequences of illicit amours. Things are deplorable enough at present with us, in spite of the corrective influence of a pretty general practice of early marriage. What then have we to expect were this corrective influence destroyed? The result cannot be contemplated without a virtuous horror.

Such a retardation of marriage is as unfavourable to prudence and decent conduct, as to virtue in love. Society would at length become perfectly abandoned under a considerable postponement of that honourable junction among the great mass. The single state, even in its present limited extent, is injurious

to virtue and correct manners, though many of those who remain bachelors and spinsters are so from choice, and from not feeling the influence of the sexual passions very strong. But were such a system enforced on the great body of young people, it would prove equally destructive to decent manners, prudence and prudential habits, as to morals.

It is curious enough, that our subsistence theorist calls upon men to do the more for nature, the less she has done for them. He calls upon them to cherish a spirit of pure virtue and sublimely disinterested philanthropy, in spite of all the urgings of natural passion, because she has been inspired with a spirit of a grossly immoral as well as malevolent kind. He urges them to act with a degree of wisdom which the great body will never reach, because she has been particularly foolish. She, according to him, is a malignant, ungenerous, starving stepmother, and they must, therefore, be benevolent children. She has proved an arrant bungler: they must, of course, correct her errors. She has bestowed life upon them, it is true, but then she has taken care to put every man and woman of them in danger of being deprived of it by starvation. She has given them certain desires at a certain period of life, when the natural result of these will be more effective in accomplishing their purpose, or the

increase of the race. This is very well, and looks like wisdom. But according to her bungling arrangements, unless the sexes postpone their intercourse till *this natural period is nearly past*, they will only promote poverty, disease and misery. If they act as she and virtue prompt, they must perish. Who that believes in the existence of a supreme Being, wise, benevolent and good, could *à priori*, for a moment, entertain the idea of the existence of so wild, so immoral and so foolish a scheme being possible under his direction?

Attempts have been made to throw a kind of wise and moral covering over this chaos of folly and iniquity\*. But it is washing the blackamore. The results of the government

\* Mr. Sumner, I believe with the best intentions in the world, has attempted the blackamore. Would he not have acted more consistently with the sacred cause, in which he volunteered, to have queried first, whether it was possible, that a benevolent, wise and good Government of the universe could be the author of so monstrous, so absurd, so immoral, so cruel an arrangement of nature? To succeed in making us imagine a system, so hostile to virtue and to happiness, could emanate from an all-good Being, would only tend to bring such kind of argumentations into disrepute. That species of reasoning, which could make it appear possible, that such a Being could be the author of such a system, must be sophistry that would reconcile any contradictions: and, in fact, prove equally one thing as another.



of the moral world, as drawn by Mr. Malthus, exhibit the reign of a malignant demon, not of a benevolent Deity. It is a mass of misery and vice in all their varied forms; and all springing from one cause, the more rapid increase of population, than of subsistence, which that malignant Being has constituted the law of nature.

This theory has a tendency completely to paralyze human exertion and industry. It spreads a thick gloom over all our prospects: but particularly, if we yield to the dictates of nature and reason, and exert ourselves to comply with their laws. The more virtuous and diligent the members of society are, the faster will they increase, and by obtaining larger incomes also, they will consume more, and thus more certainly run their heads against the wall set up, as Mr. Malthus dreams, by nature in the middle of their way, as if for the purpose of the diligent and good running their heads more severely against it; and being driven back into want, distress, misery. This wall, indeed, which he calls *the limits of subsistence*, and which seems as immoveable on his theory as the walls of ancient Babylon, is found, by our cultivators, as moveable a one in nature as the modern fence of hurdles.

He has indirectly admitted something like this effect himself, and been at the pains to

put the foolish diligent on their guard. "Even industry itself," says he, "is in this respect, not very different from money. A man who possesses a certain portion of it, above what is usually possessed by his neighbours, will, in the actual state of things, be almost sure of a competent livelihood; but if all his neighbours were to become at once as industrious as himself, the absolute portion of industry which he before possessed would no longer be a security against want." We have here as rank a specimen of arrant economism, as I have met with even in this economist; and what an unacquaintance with the actual source of productiveness in point of wealth and the real principles of circulation does it betray!

He goes on. "Hume fell into a great error when he asserted that *almost all the moral as well as natural evils of human life arise from idleness*;"—This is rather affirming too much, but, to a very considerable extent, it is true. "—and for the cure of these ills required only, that the whole species should possess naturally an equal diligence with that, which many individuals are able to attain by habit and reflection\*." As far as these evils depended on idleness, most readers will consider the supposed diligence a complete cure. Mr. Malthus

\* Dialogues on Natural Religion, part xi. p. 212.

thinks or rather imagines very differently. "It is evident," affirms he, "that this given degree of industry possessed by the whole species, if not combined with another virtue of which he takes no notice" — this mighty saving virtue, which he has not chosen to name, I presume, is *celibacy*— "would totally fail of rescuing society from want and misery, and would scarcely remove a single moral or physical evil of all those to which he alludes\*." This may be all very fine and correct according to the fancies of the subsistence theory, but according to the arrangements of nature, it is sheer absurdity.

That fantastical theory tends to degrade man to a level with the beasts. In vain has he had reason given him to regulate the amount of the supply of nature's blessings to the amount of his wants. He is operated upon as irresistibly by subsistence, as any animal that in the wilds of America must take what nature spontaneously bestows, or even as the vegetables by the juices of the soil. He is as passive and as helpless, it seems, as either. Absurd! This reasoned booby, forsooth must stand still, and deliberately wait to see himself starved, unless it shall please omnipotent subsistence to take pity on him, and of her own accord, send him a tolerable supply.

\* Essay, vol. iii. B. iv. ch. 13. p. 290.

In nature the impartial statistician saw ample provision made for the subsistence of our race, and he finds abundance, wealth, civilization and every thing that is good flowing from the increase of its numbers. But not so the subsistence theorist: not so Mr. Malthus. He sees starvation every where, and he finds every thing that is bad and miserable springing almost exclusively from one cause, to wit, the increase, or what is synonymous with him, the redundancy of population. This is mighty ridiculous.

Not our country justices themselves, since it became all the rage to abuse the poor laws, see half the evils springing from that abominable, stupid and savage code, as they are now-a-days styled by every coffee and other house politician; which Mr. Malthus spies pouring in an irresistible torrent from that source of all mischief, early marriage. In the dark weeks before Christmas, it is true, the imaginations of the aforesaid justices are filled with peculiarly black and awful ideas of the ruin clouds hanging over that impoverished, emaciated, starving wretch; England, for daring to feed her poor according to the above-mentioned destructive regulations. From them every species of misery, possible and actual, is derived, not excepting the rheumatism pains of the widowed cottager during the east winds of November. And even amid the famous cheer

which the good days of December bring, those unfortunate magistrates can scarcely get up their spirits for thinking of those abominable laws. Yet not more hypochondriacally nervous even than are our justices, than our subsistence worshippers are at all seasons from thinking of the all-ruining practice of marriage before thirty or thereabout, and that bane of every thing prosperous, the increase of our race. But to resume our gravity, our subsistence theorists and our justices should learn a little moderation.

This wretched theory is particularly hostile to those unfortunate persons among our race, the poor. Indeed it tends to paralyse humanity and extirpate charity.

The notion entertained by our subsistence theorists, though contradicted by every real cause and every actual result, that the increase of population tends to redundancy, or to overstock with respect to employment, and consequently to produce poverty, naturally urges them to check marriage. With the higher and middle ranks they dare not positively interfere, in order to prevent the early choice of that moral plan, so favourable to virtue and good manners, and equally advantageous to the individual and to the country. Their measures are, therefore, directed against the poorer classes, on which, by the way, the increase of

population in all states depends infinitely more, than on the rich.

Sir James Steuart, the original author of the subsistence theory, proposes pretty plainly the measure against the poor, which has been since recommended by our antipopulationists with such hardihood. "Several modern writers upon this subject, recommend marriage in the strongest manner to all classes of inhabitants; yet a parish priest might, properly enough, be warranted not to join a couple, unless they could make it appear that their children were not likely to become a burden to the parish. Could any fault be found, reasonably, with such a regulation? Those who are gratuitously fed by others are a load upon the state, and no acquisition certainly, so long as they continue so\*."

Mr. Malthus has followed up this proposition in a manner to which I shall leave the honest reader to give the epithet. "As a previous step even to any considerable alteration in the present system; which would contract or stop the increase of the relief to be given, it appears to me; that we are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the *right* of the poor to support. To this end, I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring, that no child born from any marriage, taking

\* Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. B. i. ch. 12: p. 93.

place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law, and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance."

"If this system were pursued, we need be under no apprehensions that the number of persons in extreme want would be beyond the power and the will of the benevolent to supply. The sphere for the exercise of private charity would probably not be greater than it is at present; and the principal difficulty would be, *to restrain the hand of benevolence from assisting those in distress in so indiscriminate a manner as to encourage indolence and want of foresight in others.*

"With regard to illegitimate children, after the proper notice had been given, they should not be allowed to have any claim to parish assistance, but be left entirely to the support of private charity. If the parents desert their child, they ought to be made answerable for the crime." But should the unfortunate child, because it has been deserted, be punished, according to these subsistence-theory ideas, is to fall upon this helpless miserable creature, because others have committed a crime, that has made it helpless and miserable. "*The infant is, comparatively speaking, of little value to society, as others will immediately supply its place.*" Surely something like getting rid of

it cannot be suggested here. "*Its principal value* is on account of its being the object of one of the most delightful passions in human nature—parental affection. But if this value be disregarded by those who are alone in a capacity to feel it, the society cannot be called upon to put itself in their place; and *has no farther business in its protection* than to punish the crime of desertion or intentional ill-treatment in the persons whose duty is to provide for it \*." But enough of this.

It is not my intention here to go into the claim of right of the poor, as that is done by Mr. Gray†. I quote these passages only to show the spirit of the antipopulation or subsistence theory, and that I have not done it injustice. The spirit is, I dare say, honest, or inspired by the views which the holders of it entertain. But it is such a spirit, that no person of humanity or good sense, no friend to mankind or human nature, whose notions and feelings have not been perverted or depraved by the sophistry of theorists, but must instinctively feel it to be unnatural, abominable and savage. Some parts of the passages quoted even from this *softened* edition, and these are perhaps not the worse specimens, I believe few persons can

\* Essay, vol. iii. B. iv. ch. 8. p. 178-183.

† On the Poor. See Miscellaneous Statistics.



read without emotions of horror and disgust \*. The reasoning, such as it may be, is particularly intended for Englishmen; and upon Englishmen it will certainly make a strong impression, but that impression will be decidedly against itself: it will plead with them the opposite cause. Whatever faults they may have, nobody ever charged them with a deficiency of humanity, or with inattention to the unfortunate.

This theory has a tendency to *depreciate the value of human life*. Were it generally believed by the lower ranks, it would produce the most horrible effects. If we are taught to think, that men uniformly increase too fast, and that their increase tends to promote poverty, and to render our share of the good things of life smaller than it would be with an inferior number, what poor person will be at the trouble of taking care of his children? or of his parents, or relations in distress? Unless he have an uncommon goodness of heart, he will be disposed to leave them to chance and their fate, under the plea that both himself and society, instead of being worse, will be better off for their perishing. *If nature by its*

\* A statistician of reputation said to me, in allusion to such ideas, "I cannot think of the authors with common patience; nor can I conceive but that the persons who have broached them, must have bad hearts." I smiled and said, I thought he knew more about theorists and theories.

*laws has not made provision for them, why should he?*

Wars, epidemics, insurrections, rebellions, crimes, and all the other moral and physical evils, will be seen by the believers in such a theory, rather with a secret approval, than with horror or regret. A medical man who little knew the doctrines which I held, said to me about the time of the broaching of the subsistence theory, by Mr. Malthus, rather uncautiously: *Inoculation and vaccination and other improved modes of medical practice, however useful for preserving life, have their inconveniences. They make us populate too fast. And these wars, scarcities and epidemics have their use. They destroy the redundant population.* Is it reasonable to expect from medical men, who entertain such theoretical notions, much attention and activity in practice in the case of the poor who cannot pay well? Would they not be apt to consider very great exertions rather officious, and to justify their indolence from their non-interference being more agreeable to nature's laws?

Consider next the case of persons who have commands in distant countries, removed from the inspection of government; of military officers, who have certain objects to accomplish against the foe; of manufacturers, owners of mines, &c. who employ great numbers of men

in their projects of wealth : will these people reckon the health or even the life of those under them, of equal care and concern, if they have imbibed these antipopulation ideas, as if they viewed the increase of human life as what it really is, the great source of the increase of employment, wealth and happiness ?

This theory, to which, after having, as I conceive, fully shown it to be directly repugnant to the real arrangements of nature, I am warranted in applying the just epithet monstrous, when speaking of the dreadful effects that very naturally flow from a belief of it, *tends to render human life insecure*. I will not mince the matter, when the happiness of society has so much at stake. It is evidently favourable not only to the abandoning or exposing of children, and of aged persons, but, in plain terms, to murder. It prompts to procure abortions or commit infanticide in illicit cases ; and it has a tendency to promote assassination. Even in minds of but moderate sensibility it has a certain effect in diminishing the horror of deeds of blood, and in those of a dark malignant cast, it is calculated to cherish a murderous spirit. That murder, and the species of it denominated assassination, in the most coldly deliberate and horrible forms, has been more common with us since the broaching of the subsistence theory, and particularly of

late, is generally admitted. I am not indeed prepared to say, that it is from a growing depreciation in the value of life caused by the antipopulation theory; for I will not affirm that of which I cannot clearly ascertain the truth. It is at least certain, that the assassinating spirit is on the increase with us; and it cannot be doubted that a belief of the antipopulation doctrines among persons of bad hearts, would make them less regardful of the lives of those whom they hate or mean to plunder. Such a doctrine, if received among the less educated ranks, would render them disposed to attend to the suggestions of passion and revenge in their enterprises with very little compunction. I repeat distinctly, *were it generally believed, it would render human life utterly insecure.*

I mean not, by this detail of consequences, indirectly to impute to Sir James Stewart, Mr. Malthus or any of the maintainers of antipopulation doctrines, whether from fancies about subsistence or about wealth, a design unfavourable to mankind. Far from this, I dare say they mean well to society. Indeed had I been, like Mr. Malthus, as thoroughly convinced of the truth of those antipopulation doctrines, as I am that they are the mere falsities of imagination, instead of confining myself, like him, to attempting to correct the errors of

nature indirectly by interfering with the unfortunate part of our race, the very poor, I should have felt it my duty distinctly to recommend to the legislature, to retard by a positive law the period of marriage. This is not merely warranted on the subsistence theory, but strictly demanded, in order to check that increase of population which tends to produce poverty and famine, and to deteriorate the condition of the great mass of the lower classes. Such a law would operate towards preventing the existence of the supposed evils, by weakening the cause. It would also be fair towards the various classes, as it would affect all alike.

But the good intention of the broacher of an erroneous opinion goes for nothing as to consequences. It will not render injurious results less injurious. I dare say Ignatius de Loyola, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau, Brissot, Thomas Paine, and a long list of broachers of pernicious notions, meant all very well. But have their good intentions prevented the bad consequences of their doctrines, or rendered these harmless?

Nor are we to judge of the real effects of opinions and theories, from the effects which they have on the broachers themselves. The views of educated and well-disposed minds may disarm the most atrocious doctrine. We

must judge of opinions, from the effects which they will naturally have upon the great mass of men, that is, of ill-informed, narrow-minded indiscriminating beings, more swayed by their prejudices and wishes, than either by reasoning or truth. And upon this mass, I hesitate not to affirm, that, with the exception of atheism, the fancies of the subsistence theory are naturally calculated to have an influence more variously and extensively injurious and immoral, than any theory broached in ancient or modern times.

In sum, the population theory, on the one hand, is not more consonant to the actual arrangements of nature, than it is calculated, as a theory, to inspire cheerfulness, industry, a love of virtue and a warm regard for our neighbours and all mankind. On the other hand, the subsistence theory is completely in contradiction to those arrangements, and at the same time, as a theory, tends to dispirit, to promote vice and dissoluteness of manners, and to degrade man, as well as depreciate the value of his life.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A GENERAL RECAPITULATION.

THE consequences of the subsistence theory have been stated strongly, but fairly. It is, I trust, unnecessary to repeat, that nothing personal is meant against the maintainers of that theory, who, I dare say, intend as honestly, as those on the side of the population theory. The animadversions, already made, or about to be made, are confined to the theory itself and the modes of supporting it, as matter subject to statistical criticism. Offensive to a theorist the free remarks of an opponent will generally prove. But when the combined cause of mankind and of virtue has so much at stake, truth must be spoken plainly and honestly, though it may sound harshly to many. To mince matters, in a case of such vital importance, is to betray the sacred cause.

The subsistence theory, in all its leading peculiar ideas, seems to have been formed with a singular ignorance of the real principles of circulation, or else with an utter inattention to

them\*. The reception which it at first met with, reflects no credit on the statistical criticism of the country. It shows how imperfectly

\* It would tend greatly to the advancement of statistical science, were all who study it, to endeavour to obtain a complete knowledge of the real principles of circulation, without reference to any theory, before they venture to examine or deliver an opinion on any branch of this most important science. Unacquaintance with them, or an indistinct knowledge of them, betrays our statisticians into the grossest errors and even inconsistencies. Of this we have all sorts of examples.

I have a curious specimen before me at present, (September 1817). Some of our newspaper statisticians are congratulating the country on the increase of employment. In one paper this is considered as springing from two combining immediate causes, co-operating with an original or predisposing cause. 1, A fall in the price of the cultivator's articles, and 2, a rise in the price of the manufacturer's. And the original cause is found in some late farther curtailments among the persons employed by Government. Now what is the fact in real life? The first circumstance tends to diminish the power of the cultivator to give employment, and still more, when combined with the higher prices of the second. This second is a proof of the increase of employment among the manufacturers, and is also a source of additional employment, combined with the lower prices of the first. These two circumstances, therefore, instead of combining, operate against each other, and tend to make the case a mere transfer one as to the nation, or to leave the amount of the national employment as before. The third circumstance, again, which is reckoned the original or predisposing cause of the increase, tended, to the full amount of the curtailment, directly to diminish employment and increase stagnation.



the science of statistics was known among us, in spite of all our learned talking about it. Had our critics examined that theory by the actual law of nature, or *the regulating power of the demand*, alone, it must have been exploded as soon as it was broached. It could not have been received by a statistician, thoroughly acquainted with the results of that all-powerful law, for an hour.

The fundamental principle of this theory of Mr. Malthus, or a natural tendency in population to increase faster than subsistence, has been styled by a French populationist *un sophisme très habilement soutenu*. I entirely agree with him that it is a sophism. I agree also with him, that it has been *very ably supported*, when I confine the latter observation to supporting it with ingenious sophistry, and an imposing consistency in the deductions from the original sophism. But when I try the manner, in which Mr. Malthus has maintained it, by the principles of circulation and of genuine statistical science, I must withdraw my approbation. I must affirm, that it is a sophism, which has been supported by much acute sophistry, but in a manner which shows a surprising unacquaintance with, or else disregard of, the real causes operating in nature and their actual results.

If there be a clear unquestionable law in

nature, or if there be one which essentially affects statistics, it is that of the regulating power of the demand over the supply, as far as this is dependent on the will of man. And with respect to no branch of the supply is its regulating influence seen more evidently operating; at the first view of the subject, than that of subsistence. If, however, in this branch, the law of nature is set aside by the counteraction of certain circumstances, this should have been distinctly gone into, and it should have been shown by a minute analysis of the operation of these, that they were sufficient constantly to overpower the law of nature in this instance.

But has Mr. Malthus done this? Far from it, I do not find any notice taken of that law of nature, as if he had not been aware that any such law existed.

Nor has he done any thing like this in a collateral way. It is clear, that if the supply of subsistence regulates the demand, it must arise from certain natural invincible obstacles operating against the demand, either a want of additional soil, or something that prevents a sufficient number of suppliers being employed to meet this portion of the demand. But there is confessedly an abundance of uncultivated and imperfectly cultivated soil every where. It must then be a deficiency of suppliers, which the demand was not in this case able to pro-

edre. Has he then taken care to show us, that there was a constant demand for more suppliers than could be obtained, by proving, that though there was a perpetual flow of circulators from the operations of town to the operations of the country, yet the cultivator could not procure the full number of hands he wanted? Neither has he gone into this at all. He has indeed accidentally noticed a well-known fact which proves the contrary, or that there is a constant flow of population from the country into towns, or of suppliers of subsistence, owing to a *want of employment*, that is, a deficiency of the demand, from that branch to other branches of the supply in which the demand was greater. Neither has he at all attempted to show, that the average price of subsistence was exorbitant in comparison with the prices of other articles, as it must necessarily have been, if the demand kept beyond the supply. Nor has he shown, that the increase of population tends uniformly to diminish the amount of employment and of wealth by overstocking.

All this was indispensably necessary to be done, in order to examine the question completely, and to establish this new principle, which sets aside one of the most powerful and universal laws of nature connected with man. But he has done nothing of the kind. He has

only been as great, and indeed unnecessary, pains to show what was well known to every peasant of observation, that there is an equilibrium between the amounts of subsistence and population. This adjustment of the supply to the demand no person, at all acquainted with the subject, could either be ignorant of, or dispute. But what proof does it bring of the existence of the principle of the subsistence theory? It proves the contrary. It proves that the law of nature operates as completely with respect to subsistence, as with respect to every other branch of the supply, by regulating the number of the suppliers, and the amount of the supply, to the wants of the population, that is, to the amount of the demand.

He has not even noticed the same equilibrium, which exists between the amount of population, and the supply of houses, clothing, service and the rest; much less shown, why this state of equilibrium, that belongs to these portions of the supply which form about 70 per cent. of the whole, *as the effect*, constitutes the subsistence portion, though equal to 30 per cent. only of the same whole, *the cause*.

He has thus never gone into the question actually at issue, with respect to the real principles and results of nature that must decide it. Instead of minutely analyzing facts, and reasoning back from them to real prin-

ciples, he has given us only assumptions, and theoretical imaginations. He sets out, with assuming the very thing that was to be proved, and which we have shown to be directly contrary to the laws and results of nature, or that population has a natural tendency to increase faster than subsistence. To support this, he assumes another absurdity, or at least another principle which is false, or that population, according to its natural rate of increase, would double itself in about twenty-five years, because, in certain combinations of circumstances, as in those of the new settlements of America, it has been found to increase at about that rate, though in all other combinations of circumstances, the natural rate of increase differs. All his reasonings are mere fancyings drawn from these fundamental absurdities, or false principles.

Indeed with equal correctness might he have assumed, that, as the natural qualities and conditions of population are to be sought for in the savage state, or the original and natural state of man, population has scarcely any natural tendency to increase. What tendency of this sort it acquires is evidently artificial, or the result of the artificial stimulants of civilization. *Subsistence, therefore, the amount of which can be increased so rapidly, that it can be made to feed a population which is doubled in twenty-five years, has a natural tendency to increase much*

*faster than population, were it not checked, in its natural progress, by the want of a sufficient demand for it; that is, from the general slowness of the increase of population.* The same assumptions, and the same reasonings from them, which are used in attempting to establish his species of subsistence theory, would equally serve to establish this species of it. But both are alike founded on fallacies. In the latter, however, the principle that the increase of population is derived from the artificial stimulants of civilization, seems warranted by facts.

His theory is not merely unsupported by the results in real life, but is in every leading point in direct contradiction to these. "Its results are in the inverse ratio of those of nature." It is in fact a theory of mere assumptions. And these assumptions are defended not by strict reasoning, but ingenious sophisms: by arguing perpetually in a circle, the circle of his own theoretical imaginations, with how little regard to real causes and results, we have seen. He looks at nature and her operations entirely through the medium of his singular theory.

All its principles are in full opposition to the *real principles of circulation*. Indeed no statistician thoroughly acquainted with these, but would at once reject the former as a system of mere fancy.

To show, that this decision is fully warranted, I shall recapitulate, and compare the causes and results of his theory with the causes and results in nature or real life.

The subsistence theory is founded on an assumption that *population has a natural tendency to increase infinitely faster than subsistence*. Yet, after the lapse of thousands of years, we find population still existing every where amid an abundance of additional means of subsistence, not yet drawn upon, and which probably will not be fully drawn upon for thousands of years to come.

It assumes, that man, amid all this abundance of means, is still in a state approaching to universal scarcity, producing among the great body want and disease.

It assumes, that *the amount of the demand for subsistence is always larger than the supply*. The price, of course, must be exorbitant. In real life, the price of subsistence ever has been, and still is, upon the average of years, at a fair rate compared with that of other articles.

It assumes, that *there is a constant deficiency of suppliers*. The fact in nature is, that a considerable portion of the people, born and bred up in the country, is annually forced to abandon the business of cultivation, from the want of employment, and emigrate to town,

where they become more wasteful or luxurious consumers.

It assumes, that the natural rates of the increase of population and subsistence compared with each other are, the former according to the geometrical, and the latter according to the arithmetical ratio. But subsistence has no rate of increase of its own whatever. What it has, is given to it by population; and, of course, its ratio of increase uniformly corresponds with that of the latter.

It assumes, that population has a certain regular natural ratio of increase. In real life its natural ratio of increase, when it does increase, is perfectly irregular, varying in every country, and in the same country at different times, according to the actual state of the stimulating and counteracting circumstances. On the combination of these for the time being its increase, decrease or stationariness necessarily depends.

It assumes, that according to the natural ratio of increase, it will double its amount every twenty-five years. The period of doubling assumed is only found in a few districts in very particular circumstances. But the average period of doubling for the whole earth, cannot have been less than 420 years\*.

\* Happiness of States, B. iv. ch. 8. p. 386.



It assumes, that *the quantity of subsistence regulates population, that is, the amount of the demand for it.* The universal law of nature is, that the demand regulates the supply, as far as this is dependent upon the will of man. And every fact, without an exception, shows that this law operates as completely with respect to subsistence, as with respect to the other branches of supply.

It assumes, that *it is according to the abundance of subsistence, that the population of a district or country increases.* In real life we find, that certain districts produce annually several times the amount of the food, which their own people require, and yet their resident population is almost stationary; and that certain countries have continued for ages to be exporters of subsistence to a considerable extent, and others to be importers: that some thinly peopled and slow populating districts import food, while some thickly peopled and rapidly populating countries export it: that, in proportion as the people in general live temperately and rather scantily, they have a greater number of children, and, on the other hand, in proportion as they use a superfluity of food, they are less prolific.

It assumes, that *the increase of population has a tendency to overstock, as to the means of employment.* In real life, the thinner the

population, the smaller is the average amount of employment, and the more idle are the various classes found to be; while the thicker the population, and the faster it increases, the greater the demand for hands, and the more constantly employed is the whole mass.

It assumes; that *the increase of population has a certain tendency to promote poverty*; while in real life the increase of population is the sole original source of all permanent increase in wealth. The faster a community increases, the more rapidly rich it becomes; on the other hand, when population is at a stand, its advancement in wealth, if it advance at all, is very slow; and when it decreases, the great mass uniformly becomes poorer.

It assumes, that *a constant deficiency in the supply of subsistence has a tendency to produce poverty among the great mass*. According to the laws of circulation, such a state of the supply of an article universally used, compared with that of the demand, by enhancing the price, would tend to create much additional wealth. It would yield an extra amount of income and capital among the cultivating classes, and consequently, through these an extra amount of employment, or the means of income, to the other classes of society. If we exclude real famines, this has been uniformly

verified in real life, when there was actually a shortness in the supply of subsistence.

It assumes, that *the predominant diseases arising from the increase of population, are such as spring from a scarcity of subsistence and poverty.* In real life, the predominant diseases arising from populousness and the increase of population, are those derived from luxury and wealth, or an excess in eating and drinking, on the one hand, and a deficiency of healthful exercise, on the other.

It assumes, that *the constant effort in the population to increase beyond the means of subsistence, tends to subject the lower classes to distress, and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition.* But is this the fact in real life? No. The uniform result of the increase of population is an increasing influence, which operates towards improving the condition of all ranks from the lowest to the highest, with respect to the various comforts of good living, education, in sum, all the means of happiness, whatever use may be made of these by the great body of circulators. The increase of population is, in reality, the grand source of wealth and improvement to mankind.

Such is the theory, which to the discredit of statistical science imposed on so many statisticians, and which at one time was considered by them as strictly demonstrated; a theory,

the results of which have been thus fully shown to be "in the inverse ratio of those of nature." I have called it a system of mere fancy: I should be justified in calling it a system of fanciful absurdity.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUBSISTENCE QUESTION AT ISSUE BETWEEN THE POPULATIONISTS AND ANTIPOPULATIONISTS.

THAT a system founded upon assumptions so directly contrary to the causes and results in real life, as the subsistence theory is, should have met with success, does seem extraordinary; Its reception may, however, be accounted for partly by a leaning in most persons, who have not thought much on the subject, towards the opinion of the multitude, that new comers, or an addition to circulators, place the old in a worse state than before; and partly from the fact of an equilibrium being found between the demand of population and the supply of subsistence.

It was too hastily assumed, that this equilibrium, the existence of which could not be disputed, must spring from the latter being the

cause of the former. Had our statisticians, however, applied the law of nature, or the regulating power of the demand, to this position, they would have seen at once, that an equilibrium was common to all the other species of supply with that of subsistence, and that it arose from the will of population. The alarming bubble of the subsistence theory would have instantaneously burst before them.

The bold assertions of a theorist, who has attained to reputation, have frequently, for a time, all the influence of truths confirmed by facts. And when these are carefully and prudently softened down in the detail by explanations and limitations, the error in them is rendered more secure from detection. The mystery, which those visionaries the economists had introduced into statistics, and which Dr. Adam Smith unfortunately assisted in preserving by his popular but unwarranted fancies respecting the fundamental principle of productiveness, had prepared the way for the reception of so wild and mysterious a theory. That celebrated economist, for an economist he is in the most important point of all, had so bewildered our sciolists in statistics, with certain fancied principles and occult or unintelligible qualities, and had succeeded so completely in turning their attention from real causes and their effects to these imaginations on that grand point, and in throw-

ing the whole subject connected with the leading principle, into doubt, uncertainty, and obscurity, that it had become as easy for an ingenious man to prove one thing as another in statistics. This science of facts was in a manner changed into a science of fancies.

Mr. Malthus seems to reckon greatly on his theory having met with so much attention, when it seems to militate so strongly against the feelings of mankind. That it is strongly repulsive to a great portion of mankind, is true; but there is another portion of mankind, and that by no means a small one, which takes a particular delight (however unnatural as well as injurious to their own happiness it may appear) in viewing human nature on the dark side. This cast of mind seems peculiarly prevalent in this country. Our most popular works, at least for a time, are those which dwell on the gloomy side of affairs. A work of this cast, if it be only successful in blackballing to a strikingly sable pitch, never fails to have a run. The gloomy and exaggerated picture of human misery which Mr. Malthus has drawn, however odious and repulsive to those who wish to enjoy existence, and see things on the fair side, is particularly attractive to our partizans of the dark side. It feeds their spleen, and gratifies them with something eminently malevolent and livid. A gentleman, who was completely

overtaken with hypochondria, told me, when the *Essay on Population* was republished, with the tour of human misery added to it, that it had given him such pleasure, he had read it over three times, and meant to read it again.

But in a free country and an inquiring age, the operations of nature cannot be long misrepresented or slandered with success. It is one of the many advantages, for which we have to thank the increase of population, that in its progress it tends to cultivate the mind more extensively, as really as the soil, and, of course, to promote free and strict inquiry. Mr. Malthus has attained to high notoriety: and notoriety has much influence in the literary world, as in the world at large. There are also certain manœuvrings among theoretical parties, which have for the time some influence in stifling inquiry and preventing the progress of truth. But no reputation, nor any manœuvrings can succeed in ultimately supporting a theory, in direct opposition to the laws of nature and their results.

Mr. Malthus, indeed, in his preface to the late edition, lays claim to the support of facts since the first publication of his work. This claim will not surprise those who have read his *Essay* with discrimination. But we have seen how far such a claim can be really supported by the result of the last twenty years.

1. With respect to the fundamental article, *subsistence*. What has been the result of the increase of our population, which, during that period, has probably been more rapid than at any other in the history of our island? Our best lands by nature had in general been previously taken into cultivation. A luxurious or superfluous consumption of eatables and drinkables (I allude, in the latter case, chiefly to the wasteful use of grain in spirits) had extended in a most extraordinary manner throughout every rank; and in addition to all this, an unusual increase of more lucrative kinds of employment, was constantly operating to tempt the peasants to withdraw from the fatiguing and the low-priced labour of supplying subsistence. Yet our cultivators have kept up the supply to the additional demand. With respect to the less frugal species of subsistence, meat, in the consumption of which there has been so great an augmentation of the average quantum, the islands have fully supplied the additional requisitions. They have done the same with regard to all the vegetable esculents, except corn. They have drawn an additional quantity of that from the exporting countries. But the amount imported has by no means increased according to the proportion of the general increase at home. And even that could have been with ease raised in the islands,



- if the deficiency had not been supplied from the superfluity of countries, whose prices are lower.

In some cases of ungenial seasons, from the successful efforts of speculation, supported by the maximum of an assize in bread, and aided by the well-meant but injudicious interference of government, there has been an appearance of deficiency; but this was more in appearance, than in reality. The quantity wanted was always forthcoming, though at a higher price. And what has been the general result with respect to the supply of grain? Such was the increase in that supply both in this country and abroad, that *our cultivators at length, after our population had increased about one fourth in twenty-five years, were forced to come forward, and in opposition to the wishes of the great body of the nation, call upon the legislature to save them, by a high protecting average price, from the ruinous effects of a superabundance of grain at home, as well as abroad.*

2. With respect to *employment*. Such has been the increase in the average amount of employment, during the last twenty years, that though new machinery of every kind has been introduced to an extent utterly unparalleled, and though the various classes of circulators have attained to a much greater adroitness in

working, both machine and human labour were barely able to keep up the supply to the demand at the close of the war. By the cessation of the war requisitions, above 500,000 hands were thrown wholly or entirely out of employment, in Britain alone. These are now obtaining employment in the peace lines. And whence? From the *increase of our population*, which is shown by the unusual extension of buildings in many parts of the island.

3. And lastly, with respect to *wealth*. Our population, as has already been noticed, has probably increased one fourth since 1792; but our income has increased more than double. Instead of rising to 170 millions, according to the old proportion, it rose to about 300. The smaller population shared about 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per individual, and the larger in 1814 no less than 23*l.* or about 70 per cent. more\*. From the cessation of war employments, and some extensive emigrations of circulators, the national income has since sunk considerably, but at the lowest it did not fall much under 20*l.* each, and now it is rising above that from the advance in prices, which has been caused by the increase of employment, created by the increase of population.

And yet further: in some years, the lower

\* Fourth Letter to M. Say, All Classes productive of national Wealth, p. 312.

ranks, it is true, were distressed, or rendered poorer by the rise in the price of provisions, which was so exorbitant for a time, that their wages could not on the sudden be brought fully up to it, as in 1801. But though they lost, for the time, the cultivator gained: and they reaped a permanent benefit, from the permanent rise in the general price of labour, created by these very rises in the price of provisions. They, on the other hand, were injured occasionally and more permanently by abundance, as in the year 1815. The diminution of the cultivator's prices, which arose from that abundance, deprived him of the means of giving the usual amount of employment. Their prices fell also, and at the same time the average amount of their employment decreased; and thus this very abundance rendered them poorer.

Such are the facts, which Mr. Malthus has laid claim to, as supporting his theory. And certainly, if results, that, in every variation of circumstances, are in the directly opposite or inverse ratio of what they would have been on his theory, tend to confirm that theory, he has obtained a complete unequivocal confirmation of it. In truth, decisive as the statistical results of the last twenty-five years have been against the unproductive system, they have

been no less conclusive against the subsistence theory.

In his attempt to foist a new and monstrous principle, equally odious as it is pernicious, into the system of nature, he has entirely failed. On a fair examination, it is perceived to be as untrue to the head, as it is felt to be repulsive to the heart. That *the amount of the supply should regulate the amount of the demand* is a principle of almost self-evident absurdity. Every principle of circulation, every real cause, every actual result is against it.

And the absurdity of the principle is rendered still more striking, when the regulating power is given to one third of the supply over the whole of the demand, while the other two thirds are perfectly passive portions of the supply, completely regulated by population.

No statistician ever did, or ever will dispute the importance of that indispensably necessary portion of the supply, subsistence. But with Mr. Malthus it is wealth, happiness, everything: the great *summum bonum* of man. It is the grand regulating cause in nature. It is the god of this lower world.

I admit, that if nature in her arrangements had constituted *the supply the regulator of the demand*, and adjusted things to that fundamental law, as far as appears (but we may not be aware of all the consequences of such a

change), it might have been as well for population as the reverse, which is the law of her present arrangements, and according to which they are all adjusted. It would certainly be a very pleasing alteration for the cultivator, the clothier, the builder, the bookseller, and indeed circulators of every class, as far as we can judge at present, to have the supply constituted the regulator. They would then have only to produce as much of an article as they choose; and they would find demanders for the whole amount. But till nature's arrangements are altered, unless circulators act according to the regulating power of the demand, they will only injure themselves. Were they to act upon this new doctrine of our subsistence theorists, they would find to their cost, that the old law of nature was still in full and universal force, though these theorists had chosen to imagine it reversed, with respect to a most important and extensive set of articles. They might double the usual supply of any article, but they would not find the number of customers for the article increased by their theoretical folly.

For myself, I never admitted the subsistence theory. Having long paid attention to the principles of circulation, and particularly to the regulating power of the demand, I perceived the theory, as soon as proposed, to be entirely founded on fallacy, or on mistaking

*the effect for the cause.* But I confess, I was not completely aware of the flimsiness of the superstructure of this alarming doctrine, or of the mere unwarranted imaginations of which it is built, till I had occasion lately to examine Mr. Malthus's work more minutely, with a view to the present discussion.

Many at least nominal believers it has certainly had to boast, but for my own part, I do not think I have met with any real. They had a kind of general idea, that the doctrine was proved; but when pressed by the laws of circulation, I found they had not examined the subject, and could neither answer the objections, nor give me a reason for so strange an aberration in nature from her own laws in the case of subsistence alone. They believed it was found to be true—Mr. Malthus had shown it at great length—but for their part they had not examined it minutely themselves, and they could not pretend to give a decided opinion upon it. In fact, as far as they did believe, they believed they knew not why, or because they imagined it was fashionable to do so.

There are some, I have been told, who talk of the subsistence principle being as strictly demonstrated as any thing in Euclid. This may be a very useful observation to prevent their opinion from being questioned by those about them who are disposed to acquiesce in their

fact; but it shows to their opponents, that these subsistencians are not acquainted with the question really at issue, and that they have never examined the subject, on which they give an opinion so authoritatively, in such a manner as to render their opinion of any value. It is perfectly clear to all who have fairly examined it, that the subsistence principle sets aside one of the clearest and most powerful laws of nature connected with man as an agent. If then it be true, that the supply of subsistence has the power attributed to it, this power must arise from certain counteracting circumstances and indirect influences. The proof of such a power must, therefore, be the result of much reasoning from a variety of causes and effects more or less obscure, desultory and uncertain. And this proof, though it may be sufficient, on the whole, to convince the learned statistician, cannot from the nature of things be perfectly satisfactory, or free from some doubts.

Mr. Malthus himself has also pressed Euclid into the cause against early marriage. "The following proposition may be said to be capable of mathematical demonstration. In a country, the resources of which will not permanently admit of an increase of population more rapid than the existing rate, no improvement in the condition of the people, which would tend to diminish mortality, could possibly take

place without being accompanied by a smaller proportion of births, supposing of course no particular increase of emigration. To a person who has considered the subject there is no proposition in Euclid, which brings home to the mind a stronger conviction than this \*."

Here, as usual, this arch-enemy of early marriage argues within the circle of his own assumptions. He assumes the very thing which is to be proved, or at least puts a case, which ~~may~~ certainly be fancied capable of existing on his theory, but cannot take place in nature under the regulating power of the demand. Where is this supposed country to be found? I presume it is to subsistence he particularly alludes, as that forms his grand object in all these views; but the case is the same with respect to all the other branches of the supply. A country that has reached its complement, and cannot enlarge its importations, must be excepted, for the population of such a country cannot increase at any rate at all. Where then is the country possessing uncultivated or imperfectly cultivated land, or is connected with countries in that state, which cannot provide *for an increase of population more rapid than the existing rate*, or for any increase that may take place, or in which the cultivators and importers will not be enabled by means of

\* Essay, Appendix, vol. iii. p. 369.



the influence of a real demand to procure subsistence fully to the amount actually wanted? The rate, at which subsistence is increased by population, for it has no rate of increase of its own, depends entirely on the will of population, and that, again, is entirely regulated by the demand, real or supposed. If the progress of population in a country be variable, so will the progress of subsistence. The latter will be more rapid or more slow for the next five or more years, than it is at present, or has been for the last five or more years, according to the rate at which population and, of course, the demand increases or decreases.

And farther: all tendency in the demand for subsistence to increase faster than at the present rate, instead of deteriorating the condition of the people, as is indirectly insinuated in this passage, would, as in the case of the other articles of the supply, improve their circumstances. By the laws of circulation, such a tendency must necessarily augment the quantum of employment and of wealth.

This fond subsistencian seems disposed completely to reverse nature in the portion of statistics under consideration. He treats population as something quite passive and regulated, just as subsistence is found to be in real life; and he speaks of subsistence as something having a kind of personal agency and regulat-

ing will, such as population in real life evidently possesses. Most chapters of his Essay present the attentive statistician with specimens of this strange taste for inverting nature, and these occasionally possessing a tinge of the burlesque.

The following passage out of many shows his fondness for introducing mystery and occult causes into a plain practical subject. Most persons would consider the opinion of Lord Kaimes respecting the Indians\* as in a manner consisting of a mere truism. But Mr. Malthus controverts it, and it certainly does not fall in with the subsistence theory. "It is not therefore, as Lord Kaimes imagines, that *the American tribes have never increased sufficiently to render the pastoral or agricultural state necessary to them*,"—Here we have a real cause specified—"but" what? "*from some cause or other*, they have not adopted in any great degree these more plentiful modes of procuring subsistence, and therefore have not increased so as to become populous†." This is curious theorising in the usual circle.

Mr. Malthus seems to argue, as if subsistence were something of a most ungovernable nature, which all the exertions of population

\* Sketches of the History of Man, vol. i. p. 99, 105. 8vo.

† Essay, vol. i. B. i. ch. 4. p. 89.

could make little or no impression upon until it chose to move of its own accord. In nature nothing is more easily moved or managed by the influence of the demand, whether real or artificial, than subsistence. It is true, that with respect to white crops, it requires a year to bring forward an additional indigenous supply. But the cultivator is perfectly aware of this; and the influence of an additional demand, by operating along with his own wishes and self-interest, is very apt to make him overdo the business and injure himself by his exertions.

The supply of subsistence in the annual crops is generally more than a year before the demand; and, if we include those forms of subsistence which require more than a year to prepare them for the market with profit, as the greater portion of cattle, it is much more than that in advance. In case of any particular failure of crops, or of any particular increase of population, this store in advance is drawn upon to supply the deficiency. Subsistence in the green form, as potatoes, or in the form of meat in case of necessity, is consumed in a larger portion than usual. We have within the last twenty years seen several striking instances both of an increasing and diminished demand, as well as of an increased or diminished supply.

The cultivator, from a necessary regard for his self-interest, yields to the impulse of all; but not with the same promptness and alacrity to a decreasing as to an increasing demand. Indeed such is the influence of the latter, from the cultivator going so willingly and fully forward with it, that if any check be given to population, or if there be a sudden withdrawing of any part of it, the result will be distress to most farmers and ruin to many, from their having overdone the increase of the supply. Of this we had too severe a proof in 1815 and 1816. From the abundance of three successive preceding crops, produced by the exertions of the cultivator and the favourable-ness of the seasons, rapid as was the increase of our population, the supply was more than it is usually, before the demand. The change of political circumstances withdrew the demand of, it is probable, about 120,000 mouths from our cultivators\*. And what was the result? The fall of prices and a deficiency of demand reduced the whole body of British and Irish farmers to distress, and a great number of them to ruin. A general despondence ensued. All additional cultivation was stopt; and in many districts portions of arable ground were turned into pasture or left fallow.

\* All Classes productive of national Wealth, p. 181.

Were not population then to proceed at its usual rate, subsistence would over-abound, at least, for some time. Indeed abundance supposes rather a deficiency of demanders or of population.

Other articles of the supply, as building, clothing, &c. like subsistence, require more or less time of preparation for increase: some portions indeed, more than a year. The suppliers are also aware of this, and from necessity adjust matters accordingly. And there would be just the same propriety of talking about population *pressing on the limits of clothing, housing, service, &c. or being kept down to their level, as on the limits of food, or being kept to its level*, in a country which has not reached its complement.

Judging from facts, the opinions of Mr. Malthus respecting the defecundating and repressing influence of the usual quantum of subsistence, under the regulating power of population in the cultivating state, appear to me to be downright reveries. The following is a curious specimen of this sort. "If a country were never to be overrun by a people more advanced in arts, but left to its own natural progress in civilization; from the time that its produce might be considered as an unit, to the time that it might be considered as a million, during the lapse of many thousand years, there

would not be a single period when the mass of the people could be said to be free from distress, either directly or indirectly, for want of food. In every state in Europe; since we have first had accounts of it, millions and millions have been repressed from this simple cause, though perhaps in some of these states an *absolute famine* may never have been known \*."

As far as this is comprehensible or intelligible, I confess, it seems to me to be the purest dreaming without reference to facts. That actual famine and occasional failures of crops have produced a defecundating and repressing effect, is true. But it is also true, that the use of a superfluity of food, or luxury, has produced the same effect, and perhaps still more extensively. The real universal fact, however, is, that the influence of general temperance among Europeans, partly from poverty or a small income, has been much more effective in rendering the population of the various states more prolific, than both the other influences put together in making it unproductive. The population of Europe is infinitely greater, at the present day, than it would have been, had it been possible, according to the arrangements of nature, that during the whole of its history, its people had guzzled in all the

\* Essay, vol. ii. B. ii. ch. 13. p. 217.

superabundance of the citizens of London, Paris, Vienna, and its other large and wealthy cities.

As this visionary humour has got much into vogue from the example of the subsistencians, I am tempted to set off a vision, built on the solid ground, against this vision of theirs whose base is in the clouds. The natural slow rate of increase in population has kept by far the greatest portion of the earth for at least four thousand years little better than a mere unproductive desert. At this day a very large portion is in an utterly uncultivated state. Indeed a very small part of it is cultivated to the highest pitch of artificial fertility. Throughout Great Britain and Ireland Mr. Gray reckons, that there is not a million of acres which yield the highest practicable average quantity, and that there are not ten millions of acres which produce three fourths of that quantity \*. What an incredible number of quarters of wheat and other grain; what an amount of potatoes and turnips, and what millions on millions of cattle and sheep have *annually* during those four thousand years been prevented by a deficiency of population and its repressing influence, from being produced!

I do not know indeed, that the progress of

\* Happiness of States, B. vi. ch. 9. p. 483.

practical science is much quickened by this kind of fanciful calculations. It may, however, have its use for our populationists to give the subsistencians a Rowland for their Oliver, since the latter will indulge in them. Nor have I any intention to blame nature. I am disposed to take it for granted, that the system adopted by her in peopling the earth is preferable, even though, from the slowness of the increase of population according to her arrangements, it has kept so great a proportion of the world a desert for these thousands of years, and prevented the production of such an incalculable amount of subsistence.

The opinion of Mr. Malthus, which pervades every part of his Essay, that the distress, existing always more or less extensively among the lower ranks, springs chiefly, indeed almost entirely, from a tendency in nature to a deficiency of subsistence, is utterly unwarranted by facts. Absolute famines are, of course, excepted. In all ordinary cases, where man is found in the cultivating state, there is uniformly found a sufficiency. If any persons suffer from too spare living, it arises not from the deficiency of subsistence, but of income. The latter, in nine cases out of ten, is the result of imprudence or vice, and might have been prevented by diligence and care. No general abundance will cure this, for it depends almost



wholly on the agent himself. But as this distress springs from poverty, and by no means from a deficiency in the supply of food, the increase of population, which uniformly augments wealth and improves the condition of all ranks, tends to diminish the evil, except in the case of imprudent or vicious conduct. Indeed a tendency to a shortness in the supply would, as we have seen, operate towards increasing employment among the working classes, and to raise the wages of their labour.

Our subsistencians seem to entertain the idea, that population waits deliberately and passively till it actually suffers from starvation before it cultivates additionally; but, in real life, the cultivator, like every other supplier, is regulated by what he can sell, and is always disposed from self-interest rather to head the demand, than to wait to be impelled by it. Nor is there any difficulty in procuring hands to enable him to advance. In all ordinary cases there is plenty of persons in the different walks of society not sufficiently employed, who are glad to receive his commands.

The favourite plan of Mr. Malthus, in order to correct the injurious supposed law of nature respecting the supply of subsistence, is to endeavour to reduce the population to the subsistence, rather than to raise the subsistence to the population. The folly of this wild mea-

sure has been fully shown in the Happiness of States \*. Were even the subsistence principle the real principle of nature, as it is but a mere imagination, it would be better to attempt to correct nature by raising the subsistence to the population, than by reducing the latter to the former. This would augment employment and, consequently, income. It is also a much more practicable plan.

Among all the imaginations of the subsistence theory, there is none more unlike the realities of nature, than the supposed tendency in the increase of population to deteriorate the condition of the great mass. The uniform effect of populousness and the increase of population is to organize more completely the community, and employ its members more effectively, as well to their own advantage as that of others. They not only raise all ranks in the scale of wealth, but they fill up the interstices of society more completely. In thinly peopled districts there are only the very rich and the very poor, the lord and the vassal; as for example, formerly in the Highlands of Scotland. But in proportion as population accumulates, there are new ranks and classes formed, till in a very thick population there is no hiatus left at all.

\* B. vi. ch. 5. p. 464.

Of this we have a most beautiful and interesting example in the statistical history of England, now probably the most populous country per square mile on the globe. The table presented by the income-tax exhibited this in a most striking manner. We find the incomes ascending by almost imperceptible grades without a break from the lowest to the highest: and the number gradually diminishes as the income increases. The whole forms a pyramid not more pleasing than instructive to the statistician. And as this country is the most populous on earth, so it presents the clearest and strongest proofs of the reality of the population theory.

Bold assumptions and assertions may succeed for a time, but they cannot finally prevail against facts. In an inquiring age like the present, it is scarcely credible, that a system, like the subsistence theory, so completely contrary to the laws of circulation and in its results directly opposite to those of real life, can long maintain its ground. The foundation principle on which it is built, or that there is uniformly an average deficiency of subsistence compared with the demand, is so glaringly untrue, that when fairly stated to a peasant, it would only raise a smile. No, no, would he say, there is always plenty of subsistence to be got, if we have only money enough to buy it.

A considerable alteration has certainly appeared in the public opinion since the publication of the *Happiness of States* in the spring of 1815. That work has made converts to the population theory both in the south and north; but how far it may have had any influence in producing the change which is now taking place in the public mind, I have not the means of ascertaining. Till its publication there was a kind of general languor on the subject, and a pretty general indistinct sort of belief on the subsistence theory. Now, however, we find every where doubts expressed about that theory, not unfrequently sneers at it, and its former believers seem to be rather in a sceptical state. Some of our public critics have declared their disbelief, and others express their belief very ambiguously. Mr. Grahame and Mr. Weyland have also come forward since on the population side. And many occasional writers have shown their good will to the same cause in desultory attacks. In short, it is very evident, from various circumstances, that good sense is now beginning to assert its influence on this interesting subject. And it is not improbable, but that, should Mr. Malthus live long, he may see very unequivocal symptoms of this terrific meteor, which he has attempted to raise in nature, being about to expire in darkness.

The particular views of Mr. Grahame and Mr.

Weyland it is not necessary here to examine. Mr. Malthus has given us some observations upon them in his Appendix. But these amount to nothing on the real question at issue\*. The only thing noticeable, that affects this question, is the rapidity with which population has increased of late in Great Britain in spite of the increase of its towns, its wealth, luxury and unhealthy employments. This has been already considered†. The extraordinary amount of additional employment created, and other circumstances that distinguished the singular period in question, and the unusual force given by them to the stimulating causes, fully account for that result. But it by no means affects the theory of the Happiness of States. According to that theory the rate of population per square mile, and its rate of increase are, with respect to the power of the demand, immaterial. Up to an universal complement, the population,

\* I am sorry to see a grave professor of political economy demean himself to have recourse to one of the puerilities of the rapturous coxcombs of the French Revolution and such literary fribbles. He sports two notes of admiration against Mr. Grahame, and no less than three against Mr. Weyland. Such extravagant wonder may be in its place among declamatory party-pamphleteers, or among trash-rapture novellists, but surely the quantum of wonder pointed out by one note of admiration, is enough for any sober statistician. *Nil admirari.*

† P. 153.

whatever be its amount or rate of increase in a country, can raise the subsistence fully to its own demand, either by home cultivation or by importation. In fact, the extraordinary increase of population and the corresponding increase of subsistence during the period quoted, afford an additional and most striking proof in favour of that theory, or of the principle, that whether the increase of population be slow or rapid, or whatever be the rate of populousness, the demand maintains fully its regulating power.

Mr. Malthus has not chosen to meddle with this theory. The inquiring statistician, however, who is acquainted with it, sees at once, that, founded as it appears to be on an express law of nature, and supported by a detail of actual causes and facts, it must either be satisfactorily shown to be unwarranted, or the theory of the Essay must be abandoned. Others have attacked only the outworks of that system, but the author of the Happiness of States, in his endeavour to establish the principles of population and production, as found in real life, enters the citadel, and assails the very foundations of it. One or other, therefore, must be exploded. Either the doctrines of the Happiness of States must be set aside as unfounded, or the system of Mr. Malthus's Essay is a

work of mere imagination contrary to actual causes and results.

There is no necessity here for going again into any farther discussion concerning the foundation principle of the subsistence theory, as that has been done so minutely already. It will be sufficient to observe generally, that if the incontestable law of nature, the regulating power of the demand, be set aside or abrogated in the case of subsistence, this can only arise from some physical impossibility. It can only be from a natural deficiency either of materials for the supply, or of the suppliers. And the results of a natural deficiency of either will be seen in a constant state of famine, or a constant exorbitant price.

1. Then, as for a deficiency of *materials*. After the lapse of thousands of years, no nation of any extent has yet reached its complement, or which does not possess abundance of the materials of supply. A very considerable portion of the globe is to this day an uncultivated waste. And of the cultivated portion ninety-nine parts out of a hundred are very imperfectly cultivated. Indeed a great portion of this yields little more than one third of what population could make it produce.

2. With respect to the *suppliers*. There is such a superabundance of these every where, that over the whole extent of the civilized por-

tion of the earth, there is a perpetual emigration of persons from the cultivating lines into towns, from a deficiency in the demand for subsistence to detain and employ them.

3. As to the index of *famines*, these are merely occasional or local. Sometimes indeed there seems to be a shortness in the subsistence branch, as in other branches of the supply; but as frequently the suppliers are seriously injured by a superabundance.

And 4. As to the index of *price*. The price of the articles of subsistence, as of other articles, sometimes rises above a fair average rate, but it sometimes falls below that rate; and on an universal average, the price of subsistence is fair: that is, it is adjusted by both buyers and sellers, according to the average prices of other articles. The supply, therefore, is fully equal to the demand.

There is nothing in Euclid, there is nothing in arithmetic, there is nothing in the results of nature that seems clearer than this deduction; or than *the existence of a complete regulating power in the demand over the supply of subsistence on an universal average; or that population regulates subsistence, as fully and entirely, as clothing, housing, or any other branch of the supply.* And this will be the fact in nature, till additional materials or additional suppliers can no longer be found.



Nor is it less clear, that the increase of population tends as necessarily to increase the average quantity of employment and wealth. The grand source of the errors of our subsistencians and other antipopulationists, seems to lie in their considering an addition to the number of circulators as an increase of sellers only, and not as it is in nature, an increase of buyers also. If they viewed these new comers as both, they would see that it is a moral impossibility, but that the increase of number must create an additional stimulus on the circulatory powers, and necessarily augment the average amount of employment, and tend to raise the prices of employment and, of course, balarge the income.

Emigration, except in certain local cases, is no proof whatever of a redundancy of population in reference to the materials of subsistence. It prevails chiefly in thinly-peopled districts and countries. In those which are very populous it exists in a much inferior degree, and in them it is generally much more than counterbalanced by immigration. It seems to have flourished most among states in the earliest periods of population, when it was most useful for peopling the earth; and in proportion as nations approach nearer to their complement, it gradually decays. It springs from a spirit of restlessness and discontent which is

found to inspire so considerable a portion of our race; and nature undoubtedly intended it to assist in promoting the peopling of the globe as well as commercial intercourse. But it is not really necessary, on account of subsistence, till a country has reached its complement both with respect to home culture and importation.

To obtain a more lucrative or comfortable settlement seems to be the great object of emigrants. In the earlier periods of society, before the cultivator could adjust the supply completely to the demand, the prospects of obtaining subsistence in greater abundance no doubt frequently had an influence. The quarrellings among men have often likewise promoted emigrations. So have also the erroneous statistics of governments. They imagined that the state was too populous, and that to send off a portion of their people as colonists would be advantageous both for those who went and those who remained. We have seen how incorrect such ideas are with respect to the parent state\*.

It is pretended, that the checking which nature, according to the populationists, gives to the increase of population, by means of luxury and unhealthy employments, is even of a worse cast than that which the subsistencians recommend. That luxury, or the use of superfluous food, and sedentary employments, which

\* P. 184.

spring from the wealth created by populousness, has a tendency to defecundate and to injure health, there can be no doubt. But, in this mode of checking, nature shows her usual benevolence and equalizing temper. The increase of riches tends to put the means of injuring health and prolificness more extensively into the hands of the great mass of society, but, by the very same gift, she confers on that mass a greater variety of comforts. If a populous and rich country be less healthy than one, which is thinly peopled and poor, it has at least a greater share of comforts and the good things of life, than the latter. On her plan too a choice is left to the human agent: If he choose virtuously and wisely, he will in general enjoy the good without the alloy.

But what is the result of the artificial checking recommended on the subsistence theory by our would-be menders (or, what I consider as synonymous with respect to all who interfere with nature's plans, botchers) of nature? Their *moral restraint*, a system of late marrying to wit, would plunge society into a flood of every species of vice and dissoluteness. And this prudent regulation, *which is to destroy poverty*, would, as far as it was effective, by diminishing the source of all permanent increase of wealth, tend to make stagnation perpetual, and spread sloth and poverty and misery throughout every class.

At the close of this discussion I have to repeat what I said at the close of the former. Aware that we are all so liable to err, I am willing still to listen to any thing farther, which can be brought forward upon the other side. Every additional objection shall meet with that attention to which it may seem entitled. I confess, however, that so clear and decisive are the facts, and so strict is the reasoning, on the side of the population theory, that I entertain not the least shadow of doubt upon the subject. Should prejudice, imagination and name prove still too powerful for facts and reasoning, I shall regret the want of success: but, to my latest hour, I shall look back, with increasing satisfaction, on my endeavours to vindicate the benevolent and virtuous arrangements of nature against the odious and pernicious principles, which our unproductive and subsistence theorists, however honestly they might intend, have attempted to fix upon them.

Fundamentally erroneous as Mr. Malthus's views on population and subsistence are, we owe in a considerable degree to him the particular attention which statisticians have for some time paid to those subjects. Though these views be erroneous in themselves, I have no doubt but, from the examination and inquiries to which they have given rise, that they will ultimately tend to the distinct develop-

ment of the subject in all its branches and bearings, and to the establishment of those views which are correct.

It is noticeable, that the science of statistics, though a familiar, and what may be called a fire-side science, for it comes home to the kitchen and parlour of every human family; is the latest that seems to attract the attention of inquirers, in the progress of civilization and general science. This may perhaps partly be accounted for from its being connected with facts so familiar, that we pass our lives constantly amid them, and are every hour receiving happiness or unhappiness from their causes or results. What we have constantly before us becomes so common, that we are apt to pay it little or no particular attention. But whether this be the cause that statistics have been so late in the history of human science in attracting the attention of learned analyzers, the fact is so. And that part of them, which is connected with population and its principles, seems the latest of all. At length, however, all branches have attracted the notice both of the learned and unlearned; and no branch more than that of population.

Unfortunately, however, those visionaries, the French economists, at the very commencement of the regular study of this most important of the sciences, succeeded in foisting into

it a machinery of mere whims and imaginations, from which it has not been able to recover to this very day. The peculiar whims and imaginations of the subsistence theory have at length been superadded to those; so that this science, as taught by most at present, is really little better than a mass of unwarranted fancies, indeed absurdities. Quesnay, Hume, Sir James Stewart, Adam Smith, Malthus, our bullionists, and many others of name, have lent their influence, more or less, to turn a plain science, connected with clear every-day facts and causes, into an unintelligible medley of imaginary or contradictory causes, principles and results, occult qualities, and every species of fancying and dreaming. The whole of this mysterious machinery of imagination and whim, must, therefore, be swept away, before this science can be really intelligible and of practical use to men.

Fortunately, on the other hand, matter of fact statisticians have, during the same period, stood forward, and most essentially assisted the student and sober inquirer, by procuring for them such a variety and amount of facts in all the branches of the science, as perhaps were never laid before the student of any other science. At the head of these illustrious benefactors to statistics, stands Sir John Sinclair, to whom that science and the cultivators of Bri-

tain, indeed of Europe, and consequently, Europe itself, are so highly indebted. It is no small praise to these statisticians to say, that they have done as much to advance the real progress of the science, as our theorists of highest name to retard it.

The former, and among them Mr. Malthus in particular, have laboured in some points to restore the Aristotelian mode of reasoning or system-making, though this has been said to be exploded. They assume some leading principle, and reason forward from it to facts, instead of analysing facts and reasoning back from them to principles, according to the mode of Bacon. This latter plan of philosophising is as much calculated to detect error and establish truth, as the former to mislead, and to promote and perpetuate dreaming in science. The sober inquirer naturally adopts the first: our dreamers and visionaries, the second. There is something, it would appear, very seductive in the Aristotelian method of assuming. It saves the trouble of a patient analysing of facts and investigation of causes. The slothful inquirer becomes master of the subject, as he imagines, at once. He is also charmed with the splendour of some of the visions, the ingenuity of some of the fancies; and that fondness for mysticising, which so many

entertain, is gratified by some occult cause or inexplicable operation.

It is not among statisticians alone, indeed, that this hankering after the old mode of philosophising, or dreaming in science, is found, but among them it is eminently prevalent. It should, therefore, be a grand object with all the friends to statistical truth to endeavour to explode it, and return to a patient analysing of facts and a strict tracing of them to real causes.

The productive theory, which is essentially connected with every branch of the science, by introducing an arithmetical clearness and certainty into it, in fact, by showing the operations of nature in circulation as they really are, is calculated to banish all ambiguousness and obscurity, and puts the subsistence division of it, with others, more completely under our cognizance. If it cannot bring our economists and other visionaries down from the clouds which they have raised, to the solid ground, it will at least dispel these clouds, and exhibit those personæ to the sober inquirer in their proper place. It will always be ready to detect every new species of the nonsense of economism, or of visioning, in whatever shape it comes.

I am well aware of the force and obstinacy of prejudice, and of the unteachable character of scientific visionaries: but the doc-



trines of the productive and population theories are written in such large and legible characters on every part of the arrangements of nature connected with them, it seems scarcely credible, that, in an inquiring age, they can be ultimately either overlooked or misunderstood. Sooner or later, through the agency of one or another, they must be received by the great body of the statisticians in Europe and America.

The year 1816, that memorable year in statistics throughout Europe, exhibited such decisive and incontrovertible proofs of the reality of the productive theory and against the unproductive, that no candid statistical inquirer, who attends to the results of that year, can well entertain a doubt.

The year 1815, another memorable year in statistics in Britain, was equally decisive against the subsistence theory. To the discredit of the age, the wild imaginations of this theory had been received by too many of our statisticians for solid realities, without examination. The results of that year alone, if fairly considered, would prove fatal to it. These, however, were by no means necessary in order to explode such a system. It is formed so clearly in contradiction to the uniform results in real life, that the examination of these results must at length dissipate the unpouth misanthropic phantom which our gloomy

paradox-mongers on its side have conjured up, in the room of the pleasing form presented by nature to the view of her unprejudiced spectators. Our statisticians will recover from their frightful reverie; and posterity will smile contemptuously at the inattention which so many reflecting men, the author of it himself among the rest, showed in admitting for a moment a system so monstrous and odious, yet founded on no actual fact connected with the real cause. This is to express our dissent in strong language. But is it too strong for a system, which, as has been shown, while it leads to every thing false in statistics, blasphemes nature, and to the extent that it is effective, injures virtue, depreciates the value of human life, degrades marriage, deadens the feelings of humanity, cherishes misanthropy and malevolence, produces poverty, inspires despondence and sloth, and completely damps all ardour of improvement?

In this discussion I have endeavoured to bring the two theories fully into contact with each other in all their leading ideas, and tried them by the laws of circulation, and by the facts which result from these in real life, in order that the reader might be able to come to a decided opinion upon them. The question every statistician will admit to be of the highest importance: not merely from the theo-

retical principles involved in it, but the practical measures of such vital influence, which depend upon the decision, as well as the peace of mind necessarily connected with the population theory. The subsistence theory has thrown a dark and most dispiriting gloom over the arrangements of nature. This is felt by all who cherish a real good will towards their race, or a love for virtue. And none have lamented it more than those virtuous philanthropists, who have too hastily taken for granted, that the subsistence theory was founded upon nature's arrangements and results.

The issue of this discussion, I shall venture to say, will dispel that gloom from every mind, which, rejecting unwarranted assumptions, and viewing nature as she is, not as she has been misrepresented to be by misconceptions and distorted statements, will allow real causes and real facts to determine what is true. Not a principle of the subsistence theory of Mr. Malthus, but is in direct contradiction to the actual principles of circulation, and not a result but is in the inverse ratio of the results of nature. On the other hand, the laws of nature, and her facts, are as uniformly in favour of the population theory of Mr. Gray. Her laws are indeed its laws; and her results, its results.

The subsistence theory is a proper appendix

to the unproductive theory, which I conceive, I have shown in another work \*, to be utterly unwarranted, and indeed in direct contradiction to the results of real life. Both are equally false and injurious to human happiness. Both alike blaspheme nature, misrepresent her arrangements, and show her as a partial malevolent stepdame, instead of a benevolent parent to all her children. The unproductive theory creates hateful distinctions unknown to her, and sets up the various classes of men against each other, as if they were by her arrangements essentially injurious to each other. The subsistence theory blasphemes her, by showing her as forming such strange arrangements, that men, by being temperate, virtuous, and benevolent, and by obeying her genuine dictates, entail misery on themselves, as individuals, and extend want and poverty, with all the evils that flow from them, throughout society. And, in order to save them from the effects of her malevolence and misconduct, it recommends measures which fill the virtuous and benevolent with horror.

These wild and, in fact, absurd doctrines, for such I consider myself as warranted to style them, are not more injurious to nature and to the happiness of men, than the pro-

\* All Classes productive of national Wealth.

ductive and population theories are just to the one and advantageous to the other. The latter are as benevolent, and tend as strongly to produce philanthropy and content among mankind, as the former are malevolent, and operate towards rendering them hostile to each other and discontented with their own condition.

The productive theory exhibits men of all classes, as essentially useful to each other, and upon nature's arrangements, in labouring virtuously for their own advantage, promoting the advantage of all the rest. The population theory shows, that the increase of our race, far from being injurious to its happiness, according to those arrangements, tends uniformly to promote the welfare of the whole.

With the laws of nature and her actual results so clearly and entirely on our side, I am warranted in considering the second, like the first, fully proved to be the real theory of nature. The history of our race, from its earliest period, and statistical facts of every kind, combine to show, that *population, on an universal average, has a natural tendency to increase, but, after it reaches the cultivating state, not to over-increase, either with respect to subsistence, employment, or wealth; for it regulates subsistence as completely as the other branches of the supply, while, in its progress, instead of overstocking,*

*either as to employment or income, it keeps uniformly adding to the average amount of both: in sum, that the increase of population, far from "tending constantly to subject the lower classes of society to distress, and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition," is the grand, indeed the sole, original cause of the permanent increase of wealth, as of civilization; and that it is constantly operating towards improving the condition of all classes of society, from the lowest to the highest, and diffusing among them a greater abundance of the means of happiness.*



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**MISCELLANEOUS**  
**STATISTICS.**

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## MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS.

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### No. I.

### THREE LETTERS TO M. SAY.

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#### LETTER I.

#### *On the Source of Productiveness in point of Wealth.*

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 2d of September 1817, has given me great pleasure indeed, from the spirit of candour which it breathes. It is a specimen, I trust, of a better disposition about to spring up between the people of our two countries, now alike free, and that certainly, with all their faults, have long been the first in the world for the attainments of the mind, and equally for the works of peace and of war. It has delighted all who have read it. Its spirit and tone form a striking contrast with that haughty ferocious spirit, and that rude, dictatorial and insulting tone, which too often disgraces the writings of opponents, and none more than political: I fear, also, in no age more than the present. There is something in candour which disarms an antagonist, and makes him regret that he is forced to dissent,

I have received both pleasure and instruction, I assure you, from your treatise on Political Economy. In some cases I have found my own opinions confirmed by new facts and by new arguments, as I may afterwards take occasion to notice.

At present I confine my remarks to the grand source of productiveness. To this I turned, as you will conceive, with much interest. Indeed I would have the statisticians both of this country and on the continent to give their attention to this almost exclusively for a time, till they reach some general settlement on this grand fundamental point. It is so essentially connected with all the questions, both theoretical and practical, in statistics, that till it is settled according to the real causes and results in nature, the science will remain, as at present, unsatisfactory and uncertain, full of a mixture of what is false, with what is true. The same unfortunate, I had almost said, scandalous fact will continue to be deplored, that scarcely two, either of its teachers or its students, agree on any leading point.

The importance of ascertaining this grand principle is now universally admitted by statisticians. And let me say, that the honour of achieving this is an object worthy of the ambition of them all. I hesitate not to affirm, that the statistician who shall succeed in discovering the real principle of productiveness, will do more for the interests of mankind, than Newton in discovering the principle of gravitation; and not less for the advancement of science in a branch perhaps even more useful and interesting than his: indeed, inferior to none. And such a discovery will as certainly insure immortality to the author. Is not all this then sufficient to tempt the statisticians, here as well as on the continent, to exert themselves?

I assume that *wealth*, in its general sense, consists of the materials of well-being or happy living, or else the means of obtaining these. On the first position, or the value in use, there seems no contrariety of opinion. It is respecting the second, the value in exchange, and the creation of the means of obtaining this wealth, that statisticians differ.

It seems to me incontestable, that if there be a certain quality, by means of which articles, or circuland (if you will permit me to adopt what I conceive to be a very useful term), when possessed of it, are rendered productive of wealth, while without it they are unproductive, this must be the source of productiveness of the wealth-creating quality. Does then any such quality exist?

In your Letter you observe: "*Vous considererez bien la valeur échangeable comme le quantum de la richesse; et en cela on peut dire que Smith, vous et moi, nous sommes d'accord; mais lorsque vient la question de savoir comment cette richesse est produite, nous ne marchons plus ensemble.*" This is exactly the doctrine which I have endeavoured in the *Happiness of States* to explain and establish. But I do not think, it is the doctrine of Smith. He in reality seems to me to express the contrary. He admits, and indeed the statistician must be completely ignorant of his subject who could deny it, that the labour of "churchmen, lawyers, physicians, men of letters of all kinds, players, buffoons, musicians, opera singers, opera dancers, &c. have a certain exchangeable value;" but he denies that this is equivalent to real productive wealth. He says, "The labour of the meanest of these has a certain value, regulated by the very same principles which regulate that of

every sort of labour; and that of the noblest and most useful produces nothing which could afterwards purchase or procure an equal quantity of labour." (Vol. ii. B. ii. ch. 3. p. 85.) The exchangeable value of their circuland is so far from being real productive wealth, that he considers it not merely as unproductive, but tending by some mysterious imaginary process to diminish the real wealth of a country. (p. 101.)

What indeed his adherents now maintain on this topic, I do not know. They seem of late so bewildered by the reasonings of the productive theory, and the overpowering force of facts against them, that I question if they know themselves. They appear to feel their theory untenable, and yet their prejudices in favour of it are so strong, that they cannot think of abandoning the cause of their master, however contrary to nature's arrangements and facts. They seem to be in a state of gloomy and uneasy scepticism. They are grown sullen.

I certainly did not think you would have admitted this doctrine, as in your treatise you have confined real productiveness to a quality of circuland, which a considerable portion of it, that has a real exchangeable value, does not possess.

You add: "Il me semble que vous attribuez cette création de valeur à la *demande* de l'acheteur tandis que je l'attribue aux *qualités* qui, dans le produit, ont provoqué cette demande." I shall presently notice what I have endeavoured to maintain respecting the demand. But I also consider the real wealth-producing power of circuland to reside in a *quality*; that is, in its *chargeability*, or being the medium of price.

LETTER II.

*Utility, not the Principle of Productiveness.*

THE wealth-producing quality you name *utility*. I am indeed much at a loss as to what quality you mean to point out by this term. "Cette faculté qu'ont de certaines choses de pouvoir satisfaire aux divers besoins des hommes, qu'on me permette de la nommer *utilité*. You add in a note: "Du latin *uti*, user d'où l'on a fait *utilitas*, utilité, qualité de pouvoir servir, de pouvoir être employé." *Traité*, liv. i. ch. 1. p. 8.

From this definition you seem to extend the term utility far beyond the common bounds. Indeed, if you had not elsewhere limited your meaning, I should have considered it to include all in the qualities and amount of articles supplied, which corresponds with the qualities and amount required by what I understand by the *demand*. In this sense it would comprehend *every thing that is used by men*, and is equivalent to the term *circuland*, adopted in the *Happiness of States*, or that which constitutes articles *circuland*.

If this be your meaning, I cannot help thinking it a very improper one, and that it would have been much better to have adopted some other term for the quality. For *utility*, in the common acceptance, points out a quality of a very different and much more limited description. It denotes something in an article or operation, which is solidly advantageous, and to a certain degree necessary to accomplish the proper purpose of the article or operation, in contradistinction from some-

thing which is trifling, merely supernumerary, or, as we would say, *useless*. By the utility of clothing, for example, we mean something in it necessary to accomplish the proper purpose of it, and nothing beyond this. Such a use of a term so well understood can only tend to ambiguity and uncertainty.

Even in this sense, however, the quality of utility in things is not productive of wealth, unless united with the quality of profitable chargeability, or its being the medium of a price, which brings profit or income to the seller, and, of course, by his expenditure, reproducing employment, income, and so forth.

But more probably by utility you mean what is generally understood among circulators by that quality, or something resembling it.

This quality of circulant did not escape my notice, when endeavouring to discover what was the wealth-producing quality of circulant. I saw it to be one quality that created a demand, and a very extensive one, but by no means the sole one. Besides, this very quality is frequently attended with a real diminution of the means of wealth. On procuring your Treatise last year, and finding that you made it the source of real productiveness, I reviewed the subject, and have since given it all the attention which your discrimination entitles your opinions to, and which, permit me to say, your candour prompted me most willingly to give.

This doctrine concerning utility had been imputed by Mr. Buchanan to an Edinburgh Reviewer of high reputation as a statistician, whom he charged with "the fallacy of maintaining, that labour, because it is useful, must necessarily be productive." On this it is observed, in the Appendix to All Classes productive of national

Wealth, p. 261, "The *utility* of circuland forms an item of the means of happiness, and is that which renders it of value to the enjoyer or consumer. But when we consider circuland in its exchangeable character, and this is always the character in which we have to view it, as affecting national wealth, it is not its utility that produces wealth. In this Mr. Buchanan is right. But it is its utility, which makes it be used, and thus renders it actual circuland; of course, endowed with chargeability." After considering the matter with much care, this is exactly the opinion, which I entertain on the subject of utility. This partial quality of things is productive of exchangeable wealth only in the degree that it is united with the universal quality of real circuland, chargeability, or a power to bring a price.

If the quantum of utility, were the quantum, and entire quantum, of real exchangeable wealth, then those portions of circuland which possess this quality would be always productive, or be exchangeable wealth to the degree in which they possess it. On the other hand, those which do not possess it at all, or in an inferior degree, will be unproductive, or no exchangeable wealth at all, or only in that inferior degree. But this is contrary to facts.

All will admit that corn possesses the quality of utility in the purest and highest degree, whatever be the sense in which this term is used. Let us now try this quality by the well-known facts of 1815; a year that will long be remembered by the agriculturists of Britain, and the results of which were too unequivocal to be misunderstood. No one will dispute, but corn possessed the same degree of utility that year, as it ever did, and ever will possess. But was it equally productive of wealth, as



during the year before, or on an average of years? "That year was one of the most productive, both in corn and cattle, to be found in the annals of British agriculture. And what was the result? From a fall in the rate of price, the abundance nearly ruined the whole body of British farmers, and severely distressed every other class in the island except fixed annuitants. In fact, it reduced the nation to a temporary state of poverty, from which it has not yet recovered." (All Classes productive, B. ii. ch. ii. p. 117.)

Let us try the other three theories by the results of this celebrated year. The produce of 1815 was unusually abundant. According to M. Quesnay's doctrine then, it must have been productive of an unusual quantity of wealth. Yet in real life this very abundance reduced our nation to a distressing state of poverty. The produce in corn and cattle possessed the usual solidity and fixedness of form required by Smith. It was, as usual, a vendible commodity, which endured after the labour that produced it was past; and yet an equal quantity of labour could not be afterwards procured by it. Indeed, a very considerable portion of the labour bestowed on this vendible commodity, far from reproducing itself, was entirely lost.

What then was the cause of this extraordinary change in this most useful species of circulant? According to the doctrines of the Happiness of States, it wanted a due degree of the quality of chargeability, or had less of it, than it usually possessed, from the circumstances of the demand compared with the supply. Indeed, a portion of it never became actual circulant possessed of any real chargeability during the year, for it could not be disposed of at all. It was of no more exchangeable value.

to the unfortunate farmer, than if it had been as much seed procured from mere weeds. In fact, it would have been better for him that he had not produced this extra portion, for the price of the remainder would have been higher, and probably have fully reimbursed him.

But next, if by the quality of utility we are to understand what is commonly understood by being useful, this limitation would exclude nearly as much circulate land from being exchangeable wealth, or from possessing productiveness, as even Dr. Smith's solid and fixed form. A considerable portion of all the divisions of articles used by men in a populous and rich country, has not the quality of real utility. What is the utility of most of the articles manufactured at Birmingham, or in your toy and trinket-making towns? Of the fabrications of Lyons and Paisley? Of the fancy patterns of the tamboured muslins of Glasgow; or of the printed cotton and chintzes of Manchester and London? Of a great portion of the ornaments of our houses and furniture? Of much of the law-proceedings, and of the medical and other processes? And yet all these have as real an exchangeable value, and are as really productive of income and capital, that is, of wealth, and, of course, as really reproductive of employment, &c. as food, or the solid parts of houses and dress. And why? Because, though not possessed of the quality, which we call utility, they possess the quality of profitable chargeability.

In some cases the quality of utility is rather injurious to the production of wealth and the reproduction of employment. The division of literature, among others, affords us examples of this. Many works of the most real utility sink unnoticed, and produce wealth

neither to the author nor the bookseller, while others of no real merit, indeed some, which, instead of being useful, are injurious to mankind, produce much to both. Whence arises this difference? Those useful works, from a deficiency in the demand, do not possess the quality of profitable chargeability, while the trash writings alluded to, by means of an abundance in the demand, acquire a large portion of it.

Again, circulant endowed with utility, is sometimes utterly unproductive; and yet the same, at other times, is very productive. Let us take for example the well-known case of Hume's History of England, a work which, though occasionally deformed by the effects of a party-spirit, unfavourable to genuine liberty, as well as of a sceptical disposition hostile to religion, is, with these exceptions, a perfect model of its kind, and unquestionably equal to any history in ancient or modern times. This work possesses utility in an eminent degree; and it has long been, productive of much employment, income, and wealth. Yet for many years, we all know, it was utterly unproductive. And why? Was it from any difference in the quality of utility? It has the same beauties and faults, the same quantity of instruction, which it had at first. It was long unproductive, because, from a total want of demand, this utility was not united with the quality of actual chargeability; and it became at length very productive by becoming united with this quality in an eminent degree.

This celebrated example may be used for explaining the process of the production of wealth, and reproduction of employment. The printing of the work gave employment to the paper-maker and printer, &c. So far it was actual circulant, producing income. But

here the process stopt. When published, it ceased to be actual circuland from there being no demand. The author or publisher lost what the printer and others had gained. It was a mere transfer case at best. Some stimulation had indeed been given to circulation by its printing, but there was no farther stimulus created by it. And had the capital expended in the production of this abortive circuland, been employed in creating some other work, the process might have gone on. At length, however, after many years a demand arose for it; and thus it became actual circuland endowed with profitable chargeability. Not only did the printing of an edition create employment, but the sale of it, by rendering another necessary, reproduced employment at least to the same amount. The profit arising from it became income to the author, publisher, and booksellers, and enabled them by their expenditure also to produce fresh employment. Thus, in these various ways, it was the medium of creating additional means of wealth.

The deduction from all this is clear and incontrovertible, that *utility, unless united with profitable chargeability, is unproductive, and that it becomes productive by means of its combination with this quality alone.* The quantum of *profitableness* in this quality, evidently depends on the amount of the supply compared with the amount of the demand.

From the datum of utility constituting the wealth-producing quality, you draw the following conclusion respecting the production and increase of wealth: "Il n'y a donc véritablement production de richesse que là où il y a création ou augmentation d'utilité." *Traité*, liv. i. ch. i. p. 7. This is undoubtedly a correct con-

elusion on the assumption, that utility is the real source of wealth: for, in such a case, where utility does not exist, there can be no wealth produced; and where it is augmented, there must be a corresponding increase of wealth.

Such, however, is unquestionably not the fact in real life. We have just seen that the wealth derived from circuland is by no means necessarily connected with the quality of utility in it. This quality frequently exists in articles, and, instead of wealth, poverty is created by them. On the other hand, a great portion of articles which actually create wealth, do not possess this peculiar quality. And yet farther: the increase of utility, far from necessarily producing a corresponding increase of wealth, frequently renders the species of circuland less productive.

A great variety of examples of all this might be quoted, both in regard to labour and skill, and the productions of labour and skill. A baker, by applying himself to plain baking, might make about a hundred a year from using a certain quantity of flour; and the same baker, by abandoning this useful branch of his trade, and taking to that of buns and pastry, out of one fifth portion of the flour, and on one fifth of the amount of capital, might, and very probably would make two hundred a year. Thus his labour and skill, by becoming less useful, would become much more profitable; while by his expenditure he produces double the amount of employment which he created in the more useful line. Another man by applying his time and labour to administering to the vices of his neighbours, might procure an income of three hundred a year. Seized with remorse he gives up this lucrative but immoral sort of circu-

land, and betakes himself to teaching young persons to read and write, by which he can barely earn annually sixty pounds. Who will dispute that his labour and skill in the new line have much more utility? Yet, far from producing an augmentation of wealth, it has reduced him to a state of poverty. By his expenditure also he reproduces much less employment to his neighbours than before.

And next with respect to the results of labour and skill. A machine may be much improved and rendered doubly useful, and yet this increase in its utility, from some circumstances in the demand, or by stirring up other competitors and overstocking the market, may produce loss instead of profit. Even articles of clothing, of a fabric really superior in utility, or in point of excellence and durability, may be sold for a loss, while others made from the same wool, of a fabric of a much inferior quality, but in some respect more fashionable, will produce profit.

But it is needless to heap up examples of a fact so well known, that an increase of utility by no means necessarily produces an increase of profit, income, or wealth.

Arguing from the limitation of utility, you deprive a considerable portion of price of the power to produce employment or wealth. You cite that part, which consists of the charge for government. "*De même quand le gouvernement met sur le vin, par exemple, un impôt qui fait vendre 15 sous une bouteille, qui sans cela se serait vendue 10 sous, que fait-il autre chose que faire passer, pour chaque bouteille, 5 sous de la main des producteurs ou des consommateurs de vin dans celle du percepteur? La marchandise n'est ici qu'un moyen d'ata-*

teindre plus ou moins commodément le contribuable, et sa valeur courante est composée de deux élémens, savoir: en premier lieu, sa valeur réelle fondée sur son utilité, et ensuite la valeur de l'impôt que le gouvernement juge à propos de faire payer pour la laisser fabriquer, passer ou consommer." p. 6.

It appears clear to me, that the portion in the price of things, consisting of the charge for government, is as essentially connected with what possesses a real utility, as the portions charged for subsistence, clothing, lodging, service, &c. "These imposts" (taxes) "are the medium by which government, as the agent of the public, charges the people for the services performed for them, by soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, and others. Forming in many cases a separate charge, they are looked upon by the multitude, as something of a different kind from other charges, and of an odious character: something that is taken from them, not voluntarily given, and for which they receive nothing tangible or visible in return. They do in fact, however, receive in return something most truly valuable, which is protection from foreign enemies, and from lawless, dishonest, and ferocious men at home. But this article is not tangible, or visible, like the bread purchased from the baker, or the clothes from the tailor. What then? Is it not as substantial a good? And does it not tend as really to their happiness?" All Classes productive, p. 127.

If the government part of the price of things be unproductive then, it cannot possibly be from its being charged for what does not possess real utility.

This, however, is noticed here merely as a fact respecting this species of circulant. The question at issue concerning productiveness is not affected by its being a fact. The power in price to reproduce employ.

ment, does not depend on any portion of its being for what is useful, more than on its being for what is superfluous, or even injurious. I should have no objection in discussing this point to concede, for the time, that the government item is not derived from what possesses utility. The power to produce income and reproduce employment, will be precisely as before, or to the amount of the item.

In what point does this portion of price differ from any other portion charged by the maker or seller for subsistence, lodging, clothing, &c? Does it not yield employment and income to the various classes connected with government as really and fully, as that portion which is drawn from the buyer for subsistence yields income and employment to the various classes connected with cultivation, and so on, with regard to all the other items charged for clothing, service, &c.? And do not those government classes, in return, by means of this portion becoming income to them, reproduce employment by expending it, or investing it as capital, to its full amount, as the cultivating and other classes by means of the items charged for them?

This charge on the part of government, again, is as really taken into the price of things, as the charge of any other class which has any thing to do with the article, or the labour and skill connected with it. Circulators then fully reimburse themselves for it.

But suppose this portion of the price to be annihilated, what would happen? The general price of things would gradually sink till it was lower by the whole proportion of this part. Who then but fixed annuitants would gain by such a fall, were nothing else to take place? But unfortunately, by annihilating this



portion of price, you annihilate the whole of the employment and income created by it, just as were you to annihilate any other of the portions, which constitute price, whether for subsistence, for lodging, for clothing (were this possible), you would annihilate the employment created by cultivating, or by building, or by manufacturing. And while you thus diminished the amount of the demand, on the one hand, on the other, you would throw the whole mass of suppliers in this line, as supernumeraries, over upon the other lines already overstocked as they would be. I have only here to quote the year 1816, as perfectly decisive on this point.

How then is the income or profit drawn, in the excepted manner, not as real an addition to wealth, as the profit or income drawn in any other? The part of price, which you have excluded, as really represents income and employment, or that which it is charged for, as well as that which, in the process of reproduction, it creates, as any other part of price. It is indeed a strict mathematical truth, that *all parts of price, whether charged for what is useful or not, must alike create more or less or equal employment and wealth, according to the amount of their proportion.*

Nothing has surprised me more, than that statisticians should have failed to perceive the reality of this grand principle in statistics, that *whatever is charged for must create income and reproduce employment in one form or another, in proportion to its amount.* This seems so plain a truth, that it requires only to be stated to be admitted. Yet our statisticians, like the multitude, demur to that part which is charged for the government and some other classes. They seem to imagine that, what is given to government in particular, is

completely lost to the nation : so much, as it were, entirely annihilated. And yet what is seen more actually operative on circulation, both in yielding income and reproducing employment, and of course creating all the additional stimulus arising from both ?

I fear, Sir, you have had reason to think me prolix. But your doctrine which finds the wealth-producing power in utility, seems much more reasonable than Quesnay's, which places it in the produce of land, or Smith's, which supposes it to reside in a certain solid transferable form of things. Besides, though utility be combined with only a part of circulant, it would admit the operations of mind within the productive circle. There is indeed something attractive in it. I have, therefore, considered it worthy of this minute attention.

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### LETTER III.

#### *Chargeability, as the Source of Productiveness:*

IF now, Sir, we turn to the examination of the quality of *chargeability*, we see that it is indispensably necessary to the production of exchangeable wealth. In all cases, in which it exists; it is productive of income, wealth and employment to the amount or degree, in which it is possessed by circulant, whatever be the form or character ; and no circulant, whatever be its form or character, that is not united with it in a profitable degree, is productive. All circumstances and changes of circumstances join to confirm this truth. It is in fact

equivalent to exchangeability, and, therefore, equal to the quantum of exchangeable wealth.

The demand which is made up of the wants and wishes of circulators, creates circulant; but it is the quality of profitable chargeability, or, in other words, being the medium of a profitable price, that renders it effectually productive. The demand is often inefficient with respect to the production of wealth. Sometimes the article which is demanded, cannot be supplied, and then chargeability cannot take place. At other times, and this happens frequently, the demand, from the state of the supply, fails to be productive, as the quantum of chargeability is deficient. And yet the demand may be very great, but the supply is greater. This deprives the circulant of the quality of chargeability in a profitable degree.

Surely then, Sir, that quality of circulant, which in a due degree uniformly renders it a source of income or the means of wealth, and, of course, the cause not only of the reproduction of the old quantum of employment, but the production of an additional quantum, and without which it is utterly unproductive of either income, wealth, or additional employment, and further the degree of which uniformly corresponds with the amount of exchangeable wealth, must be the source of productiveness or the real wealth-producing quality. This, indeed, seems to me to be what we in our language call a *truism*, or what requires only to be stated to be perceived to be true. When fairly expounded, it appears to me to be nothing short of self-evident. We must assent.

We have had so many mysterious processes, occult qualities and unintelligible dogmas introduced into sta-

tiation by our various economists, that they have become little better than a mere mass of inexplicable enigmas and unmeaning paradoxes, so that, as I have already observed, scarcely two statisticians agree. It would, therefore, be most desirable to clear this practical science, so essentially connected with the happiness of all classes in all its variety, of these paradoxical and useless subtleties. And the productive theory is calculated to accomplish that object completely.

The principle of chargeability is so simple, and so easily applied, that, if admitted, it would rid the science of all obscurity and ambiguity, and render it a science of arithmetical clearness and certainty. The results become mere matters of calculation. An individual is productive of wealth to others, that is, to the nation, just as to himself, or to the whole amount of his income. And the same is true of any body or class of circulators. It matters not, in this point of view, what be the mode, or what the species of circulation by which he and they obtain that income, for it will alike reproduce employment to others to its full amount. And the wealth of a nation consists of the total of these incomes, for they represent the means of happiness, as well as of employment. According as this total increases or decreases, the nation possesses in a greater or less degree the means of happiness and reproduction.

This principle is not more friendly to progress in the science, than it is to benevolence. On the productive system, of which it forms the basis, the advantage of each individual tends to the advantage of all, while the advantage of all tends to the advantage of the individual. It knows no lines which render one class of circulators productive and another unproductive, and

which tend to keep these classes in a state of feud against one another. Neither does nature know any. It considers all as she has made them, real friends and assistants to one another, in the general pursuit.

This wealth-producing quality holds out the glorious prospect to mankind, that the source of wealth is inexhaustible. All other qualities or principles narrow or limit that source. According to them, circulators in obtaining income, are taking from a heap. According to this, they are adding to it. The more liberally they draw they render the source more copious, and instead of injuring others, enable them (always excepting fixed annuitants) to supply themselves with a larger amount of income.

It may be urged here, that upon this theory, the more circulators charge, as they draw it from others, the more must they draw from others, and, therefore, its principle seems to operate against itself. This, however, is only in seeming. A second view of the subject does this apparent contradiction entirely away. The more circulators charge on the general fund, it is true, the more they draw from others; but the more they draw from these, the more they put into the general fund. Their income becomes either expenditure or capital. It, of course, creates employment, or the means of charging for others. This enables the latter to counter-charge in their turn, and proves the source not only of reimbursing themselves but of obtaining an increased income. For surely if a circulator charges for a larger amount of any article, or for a greater variety of articles than before, he must necessarily create an increased amount of employment, and of course income to the suppliers of these articles.

Thus the wealth-producing quality of chargeability, or the principle of charge for charge, renders the general fund unlimited. The mine of real wealth, far from being exhausted, like the mines of gold and silver, by drawing from it, becomes more extensively copious, the more it is drawn upon, from the necessarily corresponding increase in the supply. What at first view seems a paradox, on a full consideration is found to be a plain, simple, real principle in nature. And the result of it is as strictly demonstrable as any thing in Euclid.

I must not omit here to call your attention to the vital connexion between the real principles of population and the real principles of productiveness as to wealth, and the necessity of studying them in conjunction, in order completely to understand the process of the production of the latter. "The increase of population, though its influence on the production of wealth has been but too much overlooked, is the great, indeed the sole original cause of the permanent increase of wealth." In the stationary condition of population, the tendency in prices to fall from the stagnation and deficiency of stimulus, inseparable from such a state, renders it extremely difficult for a nation to keep up the wealth which it has acquired, or to procure the means of reproducing only the usual quantum of employment. But this has been fully discussed elsewhere.

In remarking on the foolish notion of Sir James Steuart, which is still that of the multitude, that, if foreign commerce should fail, the amount of internal wealth could not be augmented, you say: "*Il semblerait que la richesse ne peut venir que du dehors. Mais au dehors, d'où viendrait elle? Encore du dehors. Il faudrait donc, en la cherchant de dehors en*

dehors, et en supposant les mines épuisées, sortir de notre globe; ce qui est absurde." *Traité*, p. 20.

This, Sir, is one of those decisive arguments, which leave to the opponent only evasion or assent. If now you apply your own reasoning on the wealth procured from abroad, to the wealth acquired at home, you will find yourself fairly brought within the circle of the productive theory, out of which, by the way, you must pardon me, when I say, there is no possibility of escape. If we seek from whom any individual, or class, procures his or its wealth, we must go round the whole of the individuals and classes, for we shall find none of them draw it from themselves, but all from others. Which others is it then ultimately drawn from? or how is it procured at all? It was this dilemma, that gave me the first idea of the productive system. I felt myself irresistibly forced into it.

It would give me much pleasure to have your assistance in the attempt to simplify a science so interesting to us both, and give it the clearness and correctness of which it is naturally so fully capable. The task of stemming that flood of subtleties, mysterious processes, and unmeaning paradoxes, which has long been flowing so strongly from the wild regions of economism and fanciful theory upon it, is difficult; but surely it is not impracticable. I will trust in the good sense of the present inquiring age, that powerful though the influence of prejudices, of high name and bold assertions, be, it is not impossible to explode the strange mass of nonsensical and paradoxical whims and imaginations with which this science has been mixed, and show the causes and results of nature connected with it in her simple truth\*.

\* Such is the uncertainty that has been thrown upon the

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From your discrimination in this science, and from your attentions to facts, I will not despair to see you ultimately range yourself on the side of the Productive Theory with respect to the grand principle and its leading results. Some alterations would be necessary. But a great portion of your detail will be found to be easily compatible with the admission of that great principle. Be this as it may, allow me to conclude my letter by adopting the conclusion of your own.

“ Je m'estimerai heureux, si quelque'une des idées qui se trouvent exposées dans cet ouvrage obtiennent votre approbation et exercent quelque influence sur vos estimables écrits ; mais en même temps je recevrai avec reconnaissance toutes les critiques que vous m'adresserez, dans la persuasion qu'elles n'auront lieu qu'après un jugement rassuré des raisons que j'ai données et des faits sur lesquels je les fonde ; et qu'elles me fourniront ainsi un moyen de rectifier mes erreurs.

“ Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma haute considération.”

S. GRAY.

*London, 12th March, 1818.*

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causes operating in circulation and their results, that frequently we find our legislators, as well as yours and those of America, in discussing questions in statistics, unsaying in one part of the same speech, what they had said in another.



## No. II.

*On the Poor.*

BY MR. GRAY.

ALMOST every person in a populous country, even in the lowest regular walks of life, may by economy and prudence attain, in the course of a long life, to a competency. It is meant here, that the competency is to be computed according to his rank, and it is assumed, that his health is tolerably good, and that no particularly unfavourable circumstances occur. But rigid economy and prudence are not to be expected from all, if even from the most. Vices or misfortunes will always reduce a considerable number to occasional or permanent dependency on their neighbours. This is the fact even with respect to the members of the middle and higher ranks; and, therefore, it is less to be wondered at, that those of the lower ranks, who have seldom the advantage of a good education, should fall into the same distress.

The more populous, well-employed and rich a country is, the more likely it is to have a larger proportion of its circulators in a distressed state from vicious habits and a want of economy. In a poor-country the deficiency of employment, the consequent temperance of the people, and necessity, render habits of frugality and prudence more general. Circulators also of the higher classes being in more pinched circumstances, are less

disposed to give freely. But in a rich country the various classes of labourers, mechanics, and manufacturers obtain lucrative employment so early and with such facility, that the habits of strict frugality and prudence are but rarely found. They are, of course, both less careful and more dissipated. The great body of them, particularly in towns, live from hand to mouth; or to use a saying of the North, *they make the day and the way alike*. When misfortune, or a reverse of circumstances comes, there is nothing provided. To use another country saying, they have *laid by nothing for a rainy day*. They are, therefore, obliged to throw themselves on the pity of their more fortunate neighbours: and they do this with less reluctance, as their vicious relaxed habits have deadened much their feelings of independence. On the other hand, these fortunate neighbours, from being wealthier than those of the same classes in a thinly peopled country, are both able and disposed to give more liberally.

Thus, though at the first view it may seem a paradox, in proportion as a country grows more populous, and (what is inseparably connected with this) more rich, there will almost uniformly be an increasing proportion of paupers.

The lower ranks, even with a common share of economy, cannot well realize so much property as to meet extraordinary expenses. Their income also generally depends on their health. When unable to work, they earn nothing, and yet they are obliged to spend more than usual. The sum, which they in general can charge, is barely sufficient to supply the current expenses of the common style of living of the class. There is nothing then for the cases of illness, non-employment or

old age. Their relations cannot, like those of unfortunate members in the richer classes, assist them. The public must, therefore, make up the deficiency.

Nor has that body any just reason to complain of this as a hardship. It is through the industry of these ranks, that the middle and higher are enabled to attain a competence, or riches. All the additional wealth, which springs from an increase of population, is considerably though indirectly owing to them: for it is these poorer classes that are the most populating, or produce the greatest number of children. These children, by the employment which they create, enrich the community, and though in general they assist their parents after a certain age, the great number produced by each pair frequently proves a drawback, while they are very young; and if when they come to working years, they turn out idle or extravagant, they prove the cause of keeping their parents poor. Thus, what adds to the wealth of others, prevents them from laying by as much as is sufficient to meet accidents, and would, though they were much more prudent than they generally are. In doing for them what their very useful station in society prevents them from doing for themselves, the middle and higher ranks are only paying back a part of the wealth which they have received from that mass, as well as making some return for the various comforts which they derive from its labours. The claim of the distressed poor for the contributions of the richer, is a claim not merely of humanity, but of justice. It is a claim of strict right. And after all the heavy charges made for the poor, on striking a fair balance, the rich are considerably the gainers.

It has indeed of late been attempted to deny the

*right of the poor to support* \*. To oppose this doctrine except by a flat denial, and stating the opposite, or by affirming, that *the poor have a right to support*, seems superfluous. This is a politico-moral truism, which all attempts to confirm, would perhaps only tend to throw some doubt upon, to the mind unperturbed by a false theory. And certainly it would be difficult to make it appear more true to the well-disposed mind, than by merely stating it. As, however, it has some foundation in an unwarranted theory, it may be worth while to make an observation or two upon it.

There are natural rights, and social rights, and legal rights. When a natural right is also warranted by the good of society, it becomes a real social right; and is strictly indefeasible. Its value, or reality, does not depend on the authority of any positive law, or of any declaration from those possessing power; but on the arrangements of nature. A legal right is something that has been acknowledged and authorized by a community. A legal right may consequently be set aside by a declaration from competent authority, for what a community has enacted, it can disenact; but all the declarations of all the legislators in the world will never make that which is a *real social right* to be an unreal one, or to be what is wrong. They may indeed so declare, and they may act upon their declaration; but in so declaring and so acting, they do what is contrary to the unalterable laws of justice. They are wrong, but the right

\* By Mr. Malthus. "It appears to me," says he, "that we are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the *right* of the poor to support." *Essay on the Principle of Population*, vol. III. B. A. ch. 8. p. 174.

remains still in reality what it was, in the eyes of a perfect Being.

The poor in England have at present a *legal right* to support. This might indeed be rescinded. Parliament might declare, that *the poor have no right to support*; but I think I know Britons too well, to fear for a moment, that a British legislature will ever disgrace itself and the high character of its country for justice and humanity, by any such declaration.

As to the reality of *the right* of the poor to support, it is grounded alike upon the good of the community and of the individual. The well-being of both requires its admission. Both would be injured and rendered unhappy were it not acted upon. By the constitution of our nature we are impelled as instinctively or necessarily to assent to and act upon the proposition, *we should relieve or assist the poor and distressed*, as to such propositions as these, *we should pay what we really owe—we should perform what we promise—we should honour our parents—we should defend our country*. The universal Christian rule for right acting, or of *doing to others what we would have them to do to us*, and the grand injunction of the Author of Christianity, *to love our neighbours as ourselves*, both of which are founded on private and public good, confirm the same truth. To disclaim the right of the poor to support, is, therefore, to affirm a moral untruth; and to act upon such a principle, is to do not only what is inhuman, but what is really unjust.

The author of this false proposition has been led into it from that peculiar enmity to early marriage among the lower classes, which he entertains, and which arises from his incorrect theoretical views respecting popula-

tion \*. He seems to imagine, that pauperism springs chiefly, if not wholly, from marriage. It has, I conceive, been strictly demonstrated, that the increase of population, instead of tending, as he fancies, rather to diminish the average amount of employment and of wealth, necessarily increases the average proportion of both. Were the condition which he requires, that no man should marry who has not the prospect of being able to maintain a family, strictly acted upon in its full import,—but this is impossible, for nature is much too powerful for fanciful theory,—a decrease of population, and its necessary consequences, universal stagnation, torpor and poverty, would be the result.

No man, in such a case, could marry, who was not really possessed of actual capital able to maintain a family of the usual number; for no man, who depends upon his own labour or the chances of employment, can be said to have such a prospect of being able to support a family, as would justify him in marrying, if he were debarred of all prospect of assistance from others or the public, in case of accident or misfortunes. A week after marriage the most healthy prudent man, at the time well-employed, may meet with an accident which may either lame him or so affect his health as to prevent him from earning a livelihood. Scarcely any members of the lower ranks, on whom the increase of population

\* "He" (who marries without the prospect of being able to support a family) "should be taught to know, that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, have doomed him and his family to suffer for disobeying their repeated admonitions; that he had no claim of *right* on society for the smallest portion of food, beyond that which his labour would fairly purchase." *Essay on the Principle of Population*, vol. iii. B. iv. ch. 3. p. 181.

chiefly depends, could with prudence marry. Population would stop, and the nation be reduced to poverty and distress.

Prudence is unquestionably proper in all ranks, in making the grand choice for life. And I believe a very proper degree of prudence does distinguish the great body of all ranks with regard to marriage. There are certainly many who act like rash fools. On the other hand, many marry without any favourable prospects, and become rich, who, but for marriage, would have at length been foused among paupers. And is the grand source of wealth and civilization to be weakened or destroyed, because some persons act imprudently? Their rashness punishes itself; but the great mass, with, what cautious calculators would call, no very safe prospects, completely succeeds. The members of the lower ranks should, therefore, be left to choose on this interesting point for themselves.

Were the declaration, recommended by this writer, to be made by the legislature, and the condition which he points out, attempted to be put in force, the British constitution would not exist six months. In such a contest, between the great mass of population and government, it would soon be fatally found, that the subsistence theory had made no progress at all among our soldiers. They would range themselves as populationists to a man. But really it is more safe to pass over such wild and dangerous measures, and not to give them consequence by discussion. England, I vouch for her, will never consent to starve her poor, or abandon her distressed, in compliance with any theory. She will continue to assist in feeding the one and relieving the other.

It has become quite fashionable to declaim against the mode of supporting the poor in South Britain as giving rise to little else than inconveniences and evils to the state. A business of such vast extent, and managed by such a number of agents, must present circumstances to those inclined to carp, which will render it easy by means of selections, with the aid of a little heightening, to make a very strong case against this national measure. But it is also as easy, by another and a fair mode of selection, indeed by a plain simple statement, to make out a case of a very different kind, and to show that the English mode of supporting the poor, with all its faults and inconveniences, does credit to the country; that it is the source of relieving a vast amount of misery, and effecting a vast amount of comfort. I hesitate not to affirm, that this very system of supporting the poor, which has been of late attacked so violently by so many, forms a portion of the brightest glory of England.

Much praise has been bestowed on the precarious unexpensive mode, in which the poor are supported in many parts of Scotland.

As far as I have had an opportunity of observing, there is little in the result, that renders the plan worthy of imitation, but the reverse. The misery arising from it to many old and unfortunate individuals, is most distressing to the attentive observer. It is affirmed, that the poor there have in general an honest pride, which will rather suffer the greatest hardships and distress, than apply to the parish for relief. This is true. And the spirit is to be honoured. It does high credit to the people. But, in the name of justice and humanity, is it fair, that the very virtues of the unfortunate, the high manly spirit of the distressed, should be used to prevent



their distresses from being relieved, and to make them pine out the remains of life in a state of the most forlorn and pitiable wretchedness?

Besides, even in that division of Great Britain, the old precarious voluntary mode, which suited thinly-peopled poor times, is found more and more inadequate, in proportion as districts become more populous and richer; and the richest have been forced to adopt the English system. Scotland at present has little more than one person to twelve acres; and ere she reach one person to seven acres, or only half the present rate of England's population, and the superior wealth which such a rate supposes, she will have found herself constrained, from necessity, to have recourse universally to that plan, which England, from her thicker population and greater wealth, had been obliged to have recourse to so long before her.

The great increase in the amount drawn for our poor, has frightened many. But it is to be considered, that a large portion of this increase arises from the increase of the average rate of prices in England. During the last fifty years the average rate has risen in a proportion of at least as 3 to 1. The number of the poor, however, has certainly increased in its proportion also. This was to be expected. As we have seen, it is one of the natural results of the relaxed and less frugal habits of the great body of circulators produced by an augmentation of employment and wealth. But the increase, far from showing that England has become poorer, proves that she has grown richer. The amount paid by her to maintain her poor in the year 1776 was under two millions, and in the year 1817 it was above eight; but was the average wealth of the various classes of the people of

England in 1776 equal to the average wealth in 1817? They pay more, because they are able to pay more.

What proportion does this increase of our disbursements, large as it is, bear to the increase of our income? The latter advanced at least 170 millions during the same period. This leaves a balance in favour of our circulators of 162 millions.

But that addition to the expenditure of England forms, in fact, also a real portion of her income. Though these unfortunate circulators do not create so much employment, as if they were effective labourers, they reproduce employment to the amount of the eight millions, which they obtain by means of their more fortunate neighbours.

These contributions for the poor, like other taxes, are not really paid by the nominal payers. They are charged on the general fund, or form part of the price which each circulator charges for the articles in which he deals.

The amount paid by the English farmer, for example, is charged for in the price of his corn, cattle, &c. In this case, he seems to be better off than the Scottish farmer, though the disbursements of the latter for poor's rates are in general but small. The average rent of land, of a similar character in Scotland, appears to be higher than in England, by at least the difference in the amount of tithes and poor's rates per acre, though the average price of Scottish wheat and barley be considerably lower than the English\*. This inferiority of price in the grain of Scotland may be traced to the greater moisture of the climate, which renders the pro-

\* Third Letter to M. Say, All Classes productive, p. 304.

duce in general more abundant in quantity but inferior in quality, to the more efficient and less expensive modes of cultivation, and to the lower average rate of general prices from a thinner population, and consequently smaller amount of national wealth. I do not conceive, that it is owing to the charges for the clergy and the poor being so much lower in Scotland, for the higher charge of the landholder per acre there seems fully equal to the charge for both.

The Scottish farmer, though he seems to have an advantage, has none in reality: he pays to the landholder the difference which the English farmer pays to the clergy and the poor. Nor is the Scottish proprietor, if he has purchased his land, a gainer: for though he gets a higher price per acre in rent, he has given a larger amount of capital per acre for it. Indeed, I suspect he is rather a loser. He commonly pays more for the difference than it is worth; and I apprehend, that the interest on capital invested in land is rather less in Scotland, than in England;

The charge for the poor is thus added to the price of the circulant of the farmer and others who pay the tax; and were there no such charge or tax, that price, on the average, would be proportionately lower.

There is no question, but that supporting the poor in the generous humane way of England, is, like the best human measures, liable to be abused, and to be attended with some disadvantages. It is apt to make the base-minded among the lower ranks less frugal and careful in their prosperous days. They look forward to parish assistance, and spend without fear. But to the great body of the circulators of the working classes, who, I believe, have a spirit above asking for such relief

except in actual distress, it does good without injury. It tends somewhat to diminish the fears of poverty inseparable from their dependent condition. If things should come to the worst, they have a generous country to look to for assistance. And the knowledge of this, though they may never have occasion to apply to their country's generosity, is a source of general hope and comfort to these hard-working and meritorious members of society and their families.

To render pauperism more odious than it is of itself, it has been recommended by some to make those who obtain parish assistance wear badges. I would not have Englishmen adopt such a measure. It is not becoming their national character. I saw it tried in a Scottish parish many years ago, and it was almost instantaneously abandoned. The unfortunate poor hid their badges, or wore them where they could not be seen. Every body admitted the decency of the shame, and none were harsh enough to make them comply with the odious regulation. Such a measure would have no influence on the base-minded, while it would inflict an unmerited stigma on our virtuous though unfortunate neighbours, many of whom have seen better days. We might perhaps save some of our money, and even that I doubt, but we should lose in our national delicacy of feeling. Poverty has evils enough attending on it, without having public insult added to the number. We must not debase our generosity by the ungenerous manner of practising it. We must not stigmatise the poor.

To counteract the tendency to a dependence on the parish, we must promote friendly societies, but above all that admirable system, which is so well calculated to

disseminate among the lower classes the habits of prudence and frugality, as well as the spirit of independence; saving banks. We must raise the notions of those classes by extending education among them; and our parish clergymen should labour to point out the happy effects of industry and prudence, and the miseries which flow from idleness, extravagance, and want of foresight.

To employ the poor is recommended by every sound statistical principle. But care must be taken not to interfere with the fair gains of the effective labourer, by selling their productions at a lower than the average price.

To the system of settlement, I confess, I have a thorough dislike. The whole is equally barbarous in theory and in practice. It appears to me savage, inhospitable, inhuman, unchristian, unbritish. A more just object is pretended for it, but it puts me in mind of that detestation and hostile spirit encouraged among barbarous nations, and even among our ancestors in thinly-peopled times, against strangers, and of those foolish antipopulation ideas which dictated the exclusive privileges of our boroughs. To obviate the objection to the poor overburdening some parishes, the funds now set apart should be distributed by counties. This would ease some parishes that labour under the misfortune of having more than the average number of poor; and though those who are fortunate enough to have less than that quota, might pay a little more than usual, yet, as we all derive a considerable portion of our incomes by means of the labours of the lower classes, we ought all to contribute the due share to them when in distress. It is well known that many parishes which are the most wealthy, have few or no poor, because these have not the means of residing in them; while they are

more than proportionately numerous in those parishes, which abound with families of the lower and working ranks, that are less able to assist their distressed neighbours. This equalizing mode would render the general rate lower.

One of the greatest evils arising from the English plan of supporting the poor, appears to me to be its tendency to keep the average prices of labourers and other workmen too low. This, upon the productive theory, is seen to be a more flagrant evil, than on the unproductive. By supplying a portion of income to the circulators, when they are distressed by the rise of the prices of the necessaries of life, we operate against the natural tendency in price to adjust itself to the amount of the demands on circulators. This is stated to have been carried to a very extraordinary pitch in some parishes.

As far as this practice is voluntary, or is not dictated by imperious necessity, it is in every point of view wrong. It gives the circulators, who employ these industrious labourers, an unfair advantage against their neighbours. It deprives these labourers of the natural reward of their labours; and instead of treating them as what they are, effective members of the working community, it degrades them into paupers. I should hesitate to admit the allowances so granted into the amount of the poor rates. Such a plan is only a double way of paying the working circulator. And it operates directly against the arrangements of nature, by which price, on the average, adjusts itself to the actual demands of the circulator for the common style of living, and, with an increasing population, gradually augments the employment and income of a country.

To change a plan which involves so many interests and is of such extent as that of supporting the poor, is a matter of most serious importance, were it even practicable with safety. In the present state of statistical science, and with such fanciful notions as are generally entertained on the subject, it is utterly impracticable. The following sketch of a national poor's fund was made many years ago. The advantages which would probably result from it, are such as to entitle it at least to be taken into consideration by the statistician.

### *A Sketch of a National Poor's Fund.*

WHETHER the poor laws on the present mode could be so altered as to produce a very great or radical improvement, without introducing other evils and inconveniences, admits of doubt. It seems to me, that a plan, which should make the poor pay for themselves, by contributing towards a national poor's fund, would remedy many of the faults of the present system. At the same time it would rescue the receiver from the degrading condition of a pauper, which is so painful to the feelings of many respectable, though unfortunate persons, and so hurtful to the spirit of the whole mass of the poor.

This fund would be a national one, or for the whole of the poor in the nation; but to receive its supplies and distribute its disbursements nationally, would perhaps not be the best way to accomplish its purposes easily and effectually. The business might be done by counties; or, in the case of these being too large, by districts, for example, in Yorkshire, by its three ridings.

In each of these divisions, there would be a central office for receiving the amount of the contributions, and disbursing them to each parish according to the demand. There might be a general office in the metropolis for managing the business between the different county offices. The tax, or contribution, must be compulsory under the authority of the legislature. There should be different rates, according to which, for contributing a larger or smaller sum, each person should be entitled to draw for a larger or smaller weekly allowance. But there must be a minimum calculated on what is necessary to supply the wants of the poor. This amount at least, every one, above a certain age, possessing a separate income, must contribute, and for this he or she will be entitled to draw according to a settled rate. The various offices should also have a power to receive gifts and legacies, to form a permanent fund, to be applied to the purposes of the institution.

The lower ranks would have to pay this tax directly, but it would operate to produce a rise in their wages to cover it; and as the object of it is expressly to relieve them from distress, and make a provision for them in old age, it would probably soon cease to have the unpopularity of a tax. The middle and higher ranks, by getting rid of the payments for poor's rates, would, it is likely, be disposed to contribute more than law required, and except in the cases of very uncommon misfortunes, they would never draw any thing from the fund. The savings arising from this would go in aid of the general contributions; and a per centage might be taken on the amount of the whole, to form an accumulating fund, to meet particular exigencies arising from seasons of sickness, or of scarcity, real or pretended. As the



tates of contribution ought to be so calculated, as always to leave a balance in the office, the interest arising from this might go to the same fund for the same purpose. And should the amount be found inadequate to supply the demands in years of extreme distress, a per centage on the contributions must be imposed for the time.

The disbursements would be for the same purposes, as at present, to supply the poor, when sick and unable to work, or when they cannot earn a sufficient livelihood. But this fund should be looked on also as giving the poor an opportunity of laying up something for old age. Some of our economists and justices seem to calculate the life of the poor, as that of beasts of burden: While a man is able to work at all, he ought, according to them, to be forced to work. Those, who make the happiness of men the standard of what is right and wrong, will feel disgusted at this, and calculate in a very different manner. At seventy, every man should be entitled to a pension for life, according to the rate of his contribution; and it should be left entirely to his own choice, whether he worked any longer. To see a poor old man almost bent double, with his knees failing him, forced by necessity to drudge like the youngest, is a most pitiable spectacle. If the old man prefer working a little, he should enjoy his own earnings in addition, but he ought to have enough to live on, according to his usual style, independently of working. There would be nothing disgraceful, or degrading, in this pension, as in the weekly pittance at present. Far from this, it would be honourable. It is his own property, as arising from the contributions out of his own earnings during a long, laborious and useful life.

This scheme would tend to increase both the popu-

lation and wealth of the country. These old pensioners, by retiring, would leave a vacancy, which would create a demand for new hands to fill it up. They would, however, at the same time remain customers to the various classes as before.

On this poor's fund might be ingrafted schemes for pensioning widows and orphans. The middle and other ranks might draw an annual sum from it, in proportion to the contributions of husbands and parents for that express purpose.

The friendly or benefit societies, which have been of so much use to the working classes and are entitled to all encouragement, must be exempted from the contributions. The members belonging to these in this island amount to several hundred thousands \*. This will occasion a considerable diminution in the income, but so will it proportionally in the expenditure. Every member, on producing a certificate from a society, that he is an efficient member, should be exempted from the tax imposed by the legislature, unless he shall choose voluntarily to pay it, in order to enjoy the advantages resulting from contributing. It might be taken into consideration by the legislature, whether a person should be exempt from the legal contribution, on becoming a member after the establishment of this national scheme. It would perhaps be better not to exempt him, but to leave every one the choice of enjoying the advantages of the other plan also.

On this scheme, all that vexatious business arising from settlement, and all the inconveniencies of removing

\* The number is greatly increased since this was written. It is stated that one twelfth of our resident population now belongs to these societies.

the poor to their parishes, might be avoided. The person claiming could be paid by the district, in which he is resident for the time, according to the rate of the contributions for which he should produce receipts. The metropolitan or central office might afterwards determine what proportion any district should have to pay, and order it to be paid. If indeed it were judged better, that all the districts should transmit their contributions to the central office, and draw for the amount of their weekly disbursements, or strike a weekly balance and transmit it when the income exceeds the expenditure, it would be immaterial what office the person paid his contributions to, or from which he drew out, what he was entitled to receive.

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### No. III.

#### *Foundling Establishments, or Hospitals.*

Much has been said of late by some against hospitals, or receptacles for foundlings. This arises naturally out of the antipopulation theory.

If population could increase too rapidly, such institutions are hurtful, for their influence, as far as it extends, operates towards that increase. But the more rapid the increase of population, the more does a country flourish, and the richer it becomes. These receptacles, even in this point of view, are, therefore, useful. They are to be considered as assisting the country in its progress in wealth and the means of happiness.

But while they are advantageous to a nation in this

point of view, they are warranted by a still nobler principle, humanity. No object can be more humane, or more worthy of the attention of the good, than to protect helpless infants, abandoned either from misery or or from shame by their natural protectors, and left to perish.

To theory some seem disposed to sacrifice feeling and every thing else, which appears to stand in the way of it. The virtuous and practical statisticians will allow no theoretical imaginations to check him in the practice of humanity and patriotism. The imperfections of human nature give rise to many evils in society, which can neither be completely prevented nor cured. We are to take men as we find them, and to apply the best remedies we can to the effects of their aberrations.

There is not an affection of the heart of man more strong, than that of the love of our offspring, particularly while these are very young, and cannot exist without protection. This is eminently true when applied to the female. There are wretches, it is granted, who are sunk so low in corruption and criminality, that they have scarcely any thing human left but the form. With such exceptions, nothing but the extreme of misery could force a mother to abandon her infant child. We have all seen with what force parents cling to their children even amid the most uncomfortable and hopeless circumstances: and not in the virtuous class only neither. The truth is, that children, even in the most forlorn cases, instead of being felt by their parents as only evils increasing their own, though themselves may say and even fancy so, are in reality the principal source of what happiness they have left. The exquisitely fine emotions of

sympathy, and even the poignant solitudes, which they rouse in the parental bosom, render existence still worth the labour of struggling to keep amid such a dark and hopeless mass of surrounding evils. It may be laid down as a maxim founded on experience, that *if a mother abandons her infant child, it must be either from the extreme of vice, or the extreme of misery.*

In proof of this, after all the parade and exaggeration of our antipopulationists on the subject, the number of foundlings in any country is but trifling.

The object of a foundling establishment is to provide the necessary protection for those unfortunate children that have been abandoned by their natural protectors, whether from misery or from criminality. Can there be any measure more agreeable to our natural ideas and feelings, than for society to prepare protection for such helpless little creatures so abandoned? Every head and every heart reply at once instinctively, No.

But such institutions, it has been said, tend to encourage illicit connexions, and to induce married mothers to escape the trouble of bringing up their children by abandoning them to the care of the public.

If the miseries attending upon illicit amours, and the almost absolute certainty of detection, be not sufficient to deter females, who have all a keen perception of consequences in such cases, the hope of escaping shame by abandoning the fruit of their unlawful connexions, will not be wanted to make them imprudent. The miseries and horrors of criminal pregnancy, and the dread of shame and exposure, are but too apt to make the despairing female think of getting rid of her distresses by either destroying or exposing the child. And if either choice must be made, who will not allow the latter to be pre-

ferable? I have no doubt, but were foundling establishments more within the reach of these unfortunate females, child-murder would be less common.

As to the objection, that such establishments have a tendency to induce married mothers to abandon their children, I have to repeat, that such is the force of nature, no mother will abandon her infant, who is not driven to the unnatural act by the most severe necessity. Or, if there be any mother, who would voluntarily forsake her child, she would get rid of it in a summary manner, were exposing it not in her power.

But let it be supposed, that it is chiefly worthless parents, who abandon their children, this is an additional argument in favour of foundling receptacles. The children of such parents would be bred up amid every species of vice and crime. They would prove the pests of society, and most probably would close their detestable lives as felons. But in these receptacles they are trained up in the habits of virtue, and fitted for becoming useful members of society: and the majority of them, I believe, turn out what their education fits them to be. Were there no other advantage derived from such institutions, but this of saving a considerable number of children from crimes, and making them useful instead of injurious to the community, they would be worthy of all encouragement. It is to be regretted, that they are not more common than they are with us. But similar institutions, under different names, as hospitals for orphans, &c. do exist in most districts, equally to the credit and the advantage of the country. Our work-houses also are had recourse to in cases of exposure, though by no means particularly fit for the purpose. It is urged, that such institutions are expensive.

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This, however, does not affect their principle: And what though they be? The expense is well laid out. And this expense, as in the case of all similar institutions, tends to increase the wealth of the country. If we are to take this into consideration, the argument is still upon their side. A foundling establishment proves an additional source of employment to the mechanics in erecting and repairing the offices connected with it: and in the management of it lucrative employment is afforded to several persons, and a comfortable subsistence to others. These become all additional customers to the cultivator, manufacturer, &c. It is to be looked on in a similar light as a new species of circulant, though but small in its amount, which yields additional and profitable employment to a certain number, and thus tends to increase the sum total of the profitable circulant of the country. Part of the funds, in general, is derived from the voluntary contribution of wealthy persons of a benevolent cast of mind. And the management of such institutions gives these excellent people employment of a sort most agreeable to them, and which exercises the best feelings of our nature.

In sum, whatever antipopulationists may pretend, these institutions are entitled to every encouragement, and they rank high among those, which tend to correct the evil effects of the aberrations of human agents. To recapitulate: they add to population; they save many infants, who would probably otherwise be destroyed. They make useful and happy members of society of a great number, who would prove equally injurious to the happiness of the community and to their own. And to add to these advantages resulting from their natural object, they give profitable employment or a comfortable

competence to the persons engaged in the management of them; they increase the demand for the articles of the cultivator, mechanic and others; and they yield a benevolent kind of business to some of the rich.

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No. IV.

*A new, or modern Crusade,*

*Should certain not improbable events take place in Turkey, Christianity, under the auspices of Britain, and aided by British civilization, will find it a less difficult task to extend her benevolent sway among the unreasoning bigots of the East. P. 159.*

SUPPOSE the spirit of one of the most distinguished and enthusiastic crusaders of the twelfth century, roused by the fame of the *new Christian League*, were to return to earth; and make its appearance among the royal leaguers and others, at the congress, about to take place at ———, to settle affairs, what would it say to the astonished auditors?

But ghosts, as it is well known, usually speak in a mysterious a way, and that too in so laconic and even monosyllabic a style, that it is difficult to conjecture *a priori* what they would say. Besides, they are too apt to frighten their hearers for these to be able to attend with due composure.

Suppose then this venerable spirit were to conceal itself in the bosom of one of the most liberal of the



politicians assembled there, and prompt him to speak for it. The bigotry of the old warrior spirit would be corrected by the liberality and enlightened views of our modern politician; while the mere political ideas of the latter would receive a taint of enthusiasm for the rights of Christendom, and he would feel himself animated with an unexpected warmth in her cause. Under such inspiration he could not maintain silence on so auspicious an occasion, great as his auditors were. Emboldened by their well-known good will to the cause, and prompted by the frank, cordial, old spirit within, he would address them with the honest warmth, freedom, and plainness of times long past, but which is said to be reckoned very old fashioned by modern statesmen; and probably enough to the following import. His royal and ministerial hearers would no doubt be surprised at first, and put on a quering look as to what this might mean: yet they might listen with occasional approbation to the inspired speaker, and even feel animated by his oration respecting a new crusade.

Christendom, would he begin, is now fully possessed of the power to assert her rights, and she ought to assert them. Our Christian brethren, degraded and suffering under Mahometan tyranny, must be raised to their proper place again, and effectually protected. There never was a time so fitting for this great purpose. Will she not then improve it? Millions of these brethren are treated like slaves, or rather like beasts, in the countries which were once their own, and to which they have still only the real right. Should this be so? Or will ye longer permit it?

As Christians, we must not go to war, unless from necessity. We must not shed blood, unless others force

us to it. The men of Christendom have also of late had war in sufficient abundance. Yet still we must protect our degraded and suffering brethren. Nor must this protection be a grant of it in mere words. It must be effective.

From the inefficient unprotective character of the Turkish government, it is vain to expect real protection from it, or at least only for a short season. Its members could not grant security, if they would. It can only be enforced by an acknowledged Christian body in the state, formed in the metropolis for the purpose of seeing justice done, and obtaining the redress of wrongs; and this body communicating with Christian guardians in every district of the empire, and supported by the ministers of Christendom, but *for no other purpose except the complete protection of Christians*. Nothing short of this, I conceive, will accomplish the fair and honest purpose.

If the Turkish government refuses to grant the full protection of Christians, and chooses to set Christendom and justice at defiance, it must take the consequences. Need it be told what these are likely to be? Let it draw the sword, and the scabbard in such a war must be thrown away. Were it so fool-hardy, it would in all human probability rush upon destruction. Mecca would find, that it had been decreed before the creation, that a Christian emperor was again to enter Constantinople, and that the time of its prophet's power was now about to come.

The great bulwark of Mahometanism is the Turkish dynasty. Were this to expire, the detestable imposture would feel the destructive effect, through a considerable portion of its vast extent of sway.

The fall of Constantinople, or rather Turkish despotism (for Constantinople is fallen and would rise again by that event), before an European and Christian government, would give a death-blow to the Arabian imposture, and to the political miseries and moral enormities which have sprung from it. Nothing like force is meant with respect to the notions of the believers in the impostor. Such a system could not possibly exist for any length of time amid the clear light of reason. Take away the influence of the scymitar on the one hand, and let European civilization, aided by the irresistible effects of the increase of population, come into action on the other, and that religion which is hostile to every thing that is manly, that is free, that is natural, would rapidly perish of its own barbarity.

And here the friends of civilization and liberty naturally look to the sovereign of Russia. The Emperor Alexander has already done much for Europe and mankind. But there is still another glorious field before him, on which no less is left for him to do in the same glorious cause. Effective protection to the Christians of the Turkish empire, either voluntarily granted or obtained by conquest, is to be achieved. If arms are appealed to, and victory should decide for Christendom, whether in point of liberty, learning, civilization, and even wealth, the overturning of the late military despotism, has not done more for Europe, than the overthrow of Turkish despotism would do for Asia. He who raises the cross in the room of the crescent at Constantinople, would ultimately be hailed the second saviour of Asia and her oppressed millions.

I confess I should be sanguine with respect to the event, were the Turks to appeal to force against the claim

of right. With the consent of the great European states, and could they refuse their consent in such a cause? the recapture of the city of Constantine, once the second if not the first of Christian cities, would be the easy work of one or two campaigns for the warriors of Russia. But the whole must be done in the true spirit of a crusade of civilization. It must be done with a pure and holy view to restore to the fine countries I speak of, the free use of all the blessings of nature. There must be no annexation of territory, no exhibition of petty ambition. There must be governments established on the principles of practical freedom and sound policy. The governments must be Christian; but these nations must be governed by themselves.

The noble-minded Alexander, the theme of praise of every friend of liberty and humanity throughout Europe, has certainly lost some of his hold on the European mind, and somewhat clouded his glory, by his retaining the sovereignty of the much-injured Poland. He might have placed a member of his own house at the head of the constitution, but every principle of justice and of sound policy required that the government should be separate and independent.

Here our inspired politician would perceive, that his ardent love for justice had carried him upon tender ground. Having given an honest opinion, he would leave its influence to operate, and turn to another topic. He would see evident symptoms of his having roused jealousies. But he would expect more from one great power (who bordered on the enemy), aided by the good wishes of the others, than from a combination of many. If a crusade was necessary, he would consider it more likely to be effective, were the Russian warriors to be

the chief crusaders, with their philanthropic sovereign at their head. His object would be now to allay the jealous doubts and fears.

Russia, it will be said, is already too powerful. Her power is unquestionably very great; but she is cotemporary with states possessing also vast power. If her population, wealth, science and strength be increased, so are those of all her neighbours. Her territory is infinitely too large for its population ever to become fully and nationally effective. As soon as Siberia begins to thicken in population, according to the results of the arrangements of nature, there is every probability, that a division must take place. The continental states are becoming better organized. They are also now fully aware of what is required of them, and of what they can do by a junction against any overbearing neighbour. The history of the colossal power of France under Bonaparte has taught them all a lesson, which will not soon be forgotten either on the side of the greater or of the smaller states. Besides, in Christian effective governments formed in the new divisions of Europe and Asia, Russia would find useful neighbours, when she was disposed to be quiet, but strong antagonists, if she chose to encroach or dictate.

Russia, it may also be said, is not free, and, therefore, cannot well give freedom to Turkey. But though the Russian government be in form despotic, it is Christian, and its agents are evidently actuated by some of the best and most liberal principles of the representative form. What we should want in Turkey, if the case come to the decision of arms, would be to overthrow a dynasty and government founded upon a religion hostile to liberty, civilization, and every species

of mental improvement. Time and the effects of the increase of population which would result from that event, aided by a philanthropic religion and European civilization, would ultimately do all the rest.

Here the political predilections of our orator, though he would feel the warrior spirit within prompting him to go on, would urge him to stop in his career. He must seize this fine opportunity of exhibiting his talent for treating or new-modeling states to the powerful legislators before him.

The result of success to this crusade of civilization, if sound policy be attended to, would be a division of the vast domains of Turkish despotism into six or eight governments. Of these the countries so dear to every friend of literature and science, Egypt, Palestine and Greece, the two latter considerably extended, would no doubt form three. But these are things which would be regulated by circumstances, and it is unnecessary to go into any detail here. It is only intended to suggest the idea of a crusade for the deliverance of some of the finest and most interesting regions of the globe from the yoke of a race of inveterate barbarians.

A new political arrangement of the states of the northern coast of Africa, or Barbary, would form part of the object of such a crusade. All attempts to render the fanatical ruffians of Algiers, in particular, good neighbours, will prove fruitless unless we new-model their political constitution, and give them a Christian government.

This would be somewhat too political for the warrior spirit within, who would now be on a flame of enthusiasm to assert the rights of injured Christendom, and to dis-

prove the pretensions of her Mahometan foes to the regions, which they had conquered.

But suppose, would our orator then proceed, warmed by his inspirer's enthusiasm, that the die was cast, that the choice was made, that the Turks had determined on putting all to hazard, by provoking a new crusade, and that the philanthropic friend of Europe was about to send on his warrior crusaders, who had already fought so well and so successfully for the independence of Christendom against military despotism: If ruminating, in the purity of his heart, on the great work which he had undertaken, he perceived any appearance of a shadow of doubt concerning the justice of the enterprise, I would address him as I now address you all thus:

The Turks have chosen to make the appeal to arms. Be it so, we accept the appeal. And we will prosecute it till justice gives the full award. We will not shrink till we have fully satisfied the wishes of the good.

And what can be urged against the object of this new crusade to improve the condition of mankind? Every principle of justice and of sound policy warrants it and enforces it. That barbarous dynasty, the Turkish, which reflects such discredit on government, on religion, on human nature, is still a race of usurpers. They conquered by the brute force of arms countries, which did not belong to them by any shadow of right, drawn either from usage, the principle of inheritance, or the good of men. And to this hour by brute force they keep possession of these countries against the wishes and interests of the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants who form still by far the greatest portion of the population.

These ferocious religionists made the too successful

attempt in order to exterminate Christianity ; and Christendom, from its then weakness, after a struggle of centuries, was forced to give way. But did she lose her right from being overpowered by fanatics ? Unquestionably not. Those illiterate invaders have by force endeavoured to exterminate her religion, which had been voluntarily received by the nations now suffering under their fanaticism. Has she not still the right of taking up arms in her turn, to drive out these same barbarian intruders, and the religion which they forced upon these unhappy, these horribly oppressed nations ? She never abandoned the right. She never can lose it. And she may resume the assertion of it, whenever she possesses the power of accomplishing her just and benevolent purpose.

This dynasty, on the other hand, has never done any thing to soften the power acquired by injustice down into a privilege acquiesced in, and to give it a kind of equitable character, the semblance of a right. From the moment of their forcible intrusion they have oppressed the natives by the most savage, unrelenting, stupid tyranny. As far as their government has extended, by means of those unprincipled ruffians, the Pashas, whose government consists in oppression and plunder, and of the hordes of petty subordinate ruffians by whom it is carried on, they have rendered every district a district of political and social misery. The scenes of the brightest glory of man have been turned into scenes of his grossest ignominy and most complete degradation. Through the whole of their vast empire man no longer deserves the name. Lawless injustice, fanaticism, and tyranny characterize their acts towards these conquered nations, whom they treat as reluctant slaves. They are,



therefore, not the rightful sovereigns of this empire. They keep it by force, and a stronger and virtuous force may recover it from them by the laws of the purest justice and soundest policy.

And, as if to keep up the right of Christendom to those countries, these ignorant, and now effeminate bigots have never acknowledged the Christian states around them till this hour, except for occasional purposes. They have not regular ambassadors to carry on a friendly intercourse with these states. With all the pride of unlettered barbarians they consider it beneath them to treat these powers on a friendly footing. They are thus in reality and in form confessed intruders, who want no connexion with us. They hold their despotism merely by the sufferance of Christendom, and the patient endurance of slavery which has been produced by cruelty and lawless force, among the unfortunate millions over whom they and their ruffian agents tyrannize.

A very considerable portion of the slaves of this dynasty consists still of Christians, the Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, Copts, and others. All these would hail the Christians of Europe as their brethren and deliverers. Will Christendom then suffer those vast and fine countries, which have been torn from her path by a horde of ignorant savages, to remain still in a state of the most horrible oppression? Will she suffer human nature to be degraded and brutified, and prevented from making all progress in civilization and social happiness, which it once shone in its brightest glory, by despicable barbarians, when her warriors in one or two campaigns could restore them to her, and give their millions once more the privileges of men?

Is there a friend to humanity, who does not in-

instinctively wish to see this happy catastrophe take place? Is there a man who hears me, is there a man in Christendom, who can bear with patience the idea of such contemptible fanatics, and political drivellers, themselves the slaves of those janissaries, those soldiers in nothing but the name, and formidable only to those who employ them, lording it over nations once the most illustrious on earth? I speak not with reference to religious feelings: I speak as a member of the community of Christendom: I speak as a mere citizen of Europe. The infidel himself cannot doubt or demur here. Whether Christianity be of divine authority or not, we have seen, since it was allowed to act for itself, that it exalts human nature, and promotes civilization, liberty, and science. It is another term for rational and manly religion founded on the purest morality. It is calculated to make men what their reason, though so often perverted, fits them to be, rational agents, men in reality.

Would any sovereign or subject who now hears me allow some petty mercantile arrangements to stand in the way of the happiness destined by nature to so many of her millions whom tyranny has made miserable? The change would be infinitely preferable even in a mercantile point of view. The trade and wealth arising from these millions, if put into a situation to allow nature and population to exert themselves in their own way, would receive a vast increase. But we must view the subject more widely and more becoming men. Is there a human being, who takes any interest in the welfare of his neighbours, or in the progress of civilization, who would not hail with rapture the overturning of a despotism, which has for so many centuries counteracted the benevolent efforts of nature, and repressed the progress of

learning, of liberty, of commerce, of wealth, among so considerable a portion of our race, and in so many interesting districts of the earth? To thee, Alexander, in particular, the friends of Europe and of Asia, the friends of civilization, cast their eyes. Effective protection to the Christians throughout the Turkish empire, of————

## No. V.

## TABLE

*Of the comparative Population and Wealth of the Counties of England and Wales, in the Year ending the 5th of April 1801, with their Rate of Increase in Numbers from 1801 to 1811.*

| COUNTIES.      | Population per square Mile. | Total Number of Returns of 60l. & upwards, 1 in | Returns of the Rich, or of 60l. a Year and upwards, 1 in | Average of the Income of the the Rich. | Average Income of 60l. a Year & upwards, per square Mile. | Rank per Population. | Rank per Income of 60l. and upwards. | Increase from 1801 to 1811, 1 in | Rank per Rate of Increase. |
|----------------|-----------------------------|---|--|--|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                |                             |   |  | £.                                     | £.  |                      |                                      |                                  |                            |
| Bedford        | 147                         | 38  | 244  | 840                                    | 811   | 22                   | 21                                   | 9.29                             | 34                         |
| Berks          | 150                         | 28  | 100  | 600                                    | 1275  | 19                   | 6                                    | 12.                              | 41                         |
| Buckingham     | 144                         | 31  | 170  | 590                                    | 847   | 24                   | 17                                   | 10.5                             | 39                         |
| Cambridge      | 129                         | 29  | 130  | 480                                    | 767   | 28                   | 25                                   | 7.6                              | 26                         |
| Chester        | 182                         | 36  | 230  | 640                                    | 791   | 9                    | 24                                   | 5.35                             | 8                          |
| Cornwall       | 160                         | 45  | 304  | 670                                    | 567   | 15                   | 32                                   | 6.63                             | 19                         |
| Cumberland     | 70                          | 46  | 373  | 530                                    | 301   | 47                   | 45                                   | 7.1                              | 23                         |
| Derby          | 166                         | 47  | 282  | 830                                    | 734   | 14                   | 27                                   | 6.61                             | 18                         |
| Devon          | 114                         | 31  | 211  | 500                                    | 495   | 33                   | 35                                   | 8.5                              | 29                         |
| Dorset         | 96                          | 33  | 158  | 530                                    | 513   | 38                   | 34                                   | 12.3                             | 42                         |
| Durham         | 176                         | 46  | 249  | 560                                    | 640   | 11                   | 30                                   | 8.2                              | 28                         |
| Essex          | 151                         | 21  | 137  | 550                                    | 956   | 18                   | 12                                   | 8.7                              | 31                         |
| Gloucester     | 200                         | 39  | 190  | 560                                    | 940   | 7                    | 13                                   | 9.                               | 33                         |
| Hereford       | 95                          | 36  | 212  | 590                                    | 435   | 39                   | 38                                   | 18.2                             | 48                         |
| Hertford       | 136                         | 29  | 115  | 610                                    | 1024  | 25                   | 9                                    | 6.9                              | 21                         |
| Huntingdon     | 123                         | 26  | 139  | 570                                    | 844   | 30                   | 18                                   | 8.1                              | 27                         |
| Kent           | 219                         | 20  | 116  | 580                                    | 1723  | 5                    | 5                                    | 4.3                              | 3                          |
| Lancaster      | 391                         | 39  | 227  | 710                                    | 1841  | 2                    | 4                                    | 4.3                              | 2                          |
| Leicester      | 159                         | 31  | 168  | 540                                    | 835   | 16                   | 19                                   | 6.39                             | 16                         |
| Lincoln        | 74                          | 31  | 164  | 580                                    | 434   | 46                   | 39                                   | 14.9                             | 46                         |
| Middlesex      | 2922                        | 13  | 42   | 1090                                   | 91.084  | 1                    | 1                                    | 6.2                              | 13                         |
| Monmouth       | 86                          | 40  | 270  | 520                                    | 279   | 43                   | 40                                   | 8.                               | 26                         |
| Norfolk        | 149                         | 38  | 177  | 600                                    | 793   | 20                   | 23                                   | 14.7                             | 45                         |
| Northampton    | 153                         | 33  | 176  | 550                                    | 833   | 17                   | 20                                   | 13.7                             | 44                         |
| Northumberland | 80                          | 36  | 150  | 630                                    | 468   | 44                   | 36                                   | 10.4                             | 36                         |
| Nottingham     | 187                         | 38  | 195  | 660                                    | 898   | 8                    | 15                                   | 6.21                             | 14                         |
| Oxford         | 148                         | 27  | 127  | 560                                    | 1025  | 21                   | 8                                    | 11.4                             | 40                         |
| Rutland        | 100                         | 33  | 184  | 770                                    | 660   | 35                   | 29                                   | 681.5                            | 54                         |
| Salop          | 121                         | 37  | 218  | 610                                    | 570   | 31                   | 31                                   | 6.19                             | 12                         |

| COUNTIES.         | Population per square Mile. | Total Number of Inhabitants of 600 & upwards, 1 in | Returns of the Rich, or of 600, a Year and upwards, 1 in | Average of the Income of the Rich. | Average Income of 600 a Year & upwards per square Mile. | Rank per Population. | Rank per Income of 600 and upwards. | Increase from 1801 to 1811, 1 in | Rank per Rate of Increase. |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Somerset          | 170                         | 21   | 87   | 640                                | 1900  | 12                   | 3                                   | 3.5                              | 35                         |
| Southampton       | 132                         | 23   | 115  | 570                                | 1023  | 27                   | 10                                  | 4.4                              | 30                         |
| Stafford          | 115                         | 44   | 267  | 660                                | 768   | 32                   | 26                                  | 4.1                              | 1                          |
| Suffolk           | 169                         | 36   | 170  | 550                                | 865   | 13                   | 16                                  | 3.9                              | 32                         |
| Surrey            | 332                         | 21   | 107  | 580                                | 3692  | 2                    | 2                                   | 4.9                              | 4                          |
| Sussex            | 109                         | 32   | 144  | 600                                | 688   | 34                   | 28                                  | 5.23                             | 7                          |
| Warwick           | 208                         | 32   | 194  | 510                                | 960   | 6                    | 11                                  | 19.4                             | 50                         |
| Westmoreland      | 52                          | 37   | 245  | 530                                | 185   | 51                   | 46                                  | 9.5                              | 26                         |
| Wilts             | 135                         | 32   | 148  | 550                                | 807   | 26                   | 22                                  | 21.2                             | 52                         |
| Worcester         | 179                         | 33   | 163  | 510                                | 921   | 10                   | 14                                  | 6.4                              | 17                         |
| York:             |                             |  |  |                                    |   |                      |                                     |                                  |                            |
| East Riding       | 99                          | 43   | 209  | 750                                | 517   | 26                   | 33                                  | 5.                               | 5                          |
| North Riding      | 76                          | 45   | 236  | 660                                | 371   | 45                   | 41                                  | 57.6                             | 53                         |
| West Riding       | 230                         | 35   | 201  | 630                                | 1132  | 4                    | 7                                   | 6.23                             | 15                         |
| <i>W A L E S.</i> |                             |  |  |                                    |   |                      |                                     |                                  |                            |
| Anglesea          | 125                         | 142  | 676  | 470                                | 135   | 29                   | 47                                  | 10.3                             | 37                         |
| Brecon            | 35                          | 72   | 390  | 460                                | 69  | 54                   | 51                                  | 5.1                              | 6                          |
| Caermarthen       | 66                          | 94   | 566  | 608                                | 109   | 42                   | 48                                  | 6.8                              | 20                         |
| Caernarvon        | 88                          | 150  | 728  | 490                                | 72  | 42                   | 50                                  | 5.5                              | 9                          |
| Cardigan          | 55                          | 164  | 826  | 490                                | 51  | 50                   | 52                                  | 5.2                              | 11                         |
| Denbigh           | 98                          | 73   | 366  | 670                                | 265   | 27                   | 42                                  | 15.5                             | 47                         |
| Flint             | 146                         | 83   | 455  | 1070                               | 448   | 22                   | 37                                  | 8.7                              | 10                         |
| Glamorgan         | 20                          | 61   | 349  | 540                                | 231   | 40                   | 43                                  | 7.2                              | 24                         |
| Merioneth         | 44                          | 137  | 123  | 660                                | 42  | 52                   | 54                                  | 20.8                             | 51                         |
| Montgomery        | 62                          | 77   | 623  | 440                                | 96  | 49                   | 49                                  | 12.3                             | 49                         |
| Pembroke          | 89                          | 71   | 327  | 560                                | 228   | 41                   | 44                                  | 13.                              | 42                         |
| Radnor.           | 41                          | 68   | 529  | 460                                | 68  | 53                   | 53                                  | 7.                               | 22                         |

FROM the variations in the estimated extent of the counties, the interested incorrectness in the returns of income, and other reasons, strict accuracy in this table is not to be expected. There is, however, in it an approximation to the truth. The errors probably somewhat balance one another, and render it sufficiently exact to show general results.

The influence of large towns, of the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and of lucrative modes of employment, is evident. When the rates of population are near one another, variations in those points produce considerable differences. But in all, the wealth-augmenting power of the increase of population is distinctly seen, both in the proportions of the returns of 60*l.* a year and upwards, and of 200*l.* a year and upwards, and of the amount of the former per square mile. In the extremes, this is very striking. For example, the returns of income of 60*l.* and upwards in Middlesex, are 1 in 13; in Cardigan, 1 in 164: of the rich, in the former, 1 in 42, while the incomes average 1090*l.*; in the latter 1 in 826, and the incomes only reach an average of 490*l.* The metropolitan county possesses, in incomes of 60*l.* and upwards, 91,084*l.* per square mile: the Welch county only to the amount of 51*l.* The population of the former per square mile was to that of the latter as 58 to 1. At the rate of 51*l.* this would give for Middlesex 2706*l.* only per square mile, or the one thirty-third part of its actual income of the given period.

I shall only notice two counties more that differ greatly in rate of population, Kent and Cumberland. In the former the returns of 60*l.* and upwards are 1 in 20: in the latter, 1 in 46: of the rich, in the former, 1 in 116, and the incomes averaging 580*l.*; in the latter, 1 in 373, and the incomes average 530*l.* Kent had, in incomes of 60*l.* and upwards, 1723*l.* per square mile; Cumberland 201*l.* The population of the former per square mile is about three times the amount of the latter. The Cumberland rate, however, would give for Kent only 603*l.* per square mile instead of 1723*l.*; or little more than the one third.

## 458 TABLE OF POPULATION AND WEALTH.

The rate of increase of numbers in the different counties from 1801 to 1811 shows clearly, that this is not regulated by their state with respect to the quantum of indigenous subsistence. In fact, in several cases, the increase is in an inverse ratio. The population of some counties which produce most subsistence in comparison with their inhabitants, accumulated slowest, and *vice versa*. *The increase or accumulation is evidently regulated by the quantum of employment or the demand.*

The annual increase of the income of Great Britain, as shown by the income-tax, proves decisively the wealth-augmenting power of the increase of population. From 1801 to 1811, her numbers advanced rather more than one seventh or about 14 per cent. ; but her income, during the same period, rose nearly a half, or 50 per cent. Her income kept increasing in the same greater ratio than her population up to the close of the war. The income of North Britain, indeed, between 1801 and 1815, as shown by the property-tax, seems to have been trebled ; but part of this extraordinary increase in the amount of the tax, may be attributed to the more effective modes of collecting it. At the close of the war, the income of Britain had risen, since its commencement in 1793, from 13*l.* to 23*l.* per individual, or 70 per cent. ; while her population had increased only about 25 per cent. or, compared with the increase of her income, little more than at a rate of 1 to 3.

The annihilation of the immense amount of employment created by the war, lowered the income of the nation at least 16 per cent. that is, about 50 millions, or to less than 20*l.* per individual, and reduced the country to almost universal distress. The temporary redundancy of our population, produced by that event, is, however, gradually giving way before the power of

enlarging the average amount of employment or the demand, which is found to be uniformly possessed by the increase of numbers. The daily addition to our people, far from operating to continue the stagnation, is augmenting our employment and income again very palpably. The latter, it is likely, has already risen to about 31% per individual. And if our population still keep increasing at the same rate, the nation will reach the amount of employment and income from which it fell at the close of the war, there is every reason to think, in 1820.

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No. VI.

*Four Essays on the Effects of average high and low Prices\*.*

*The higher price includes, in truth, is made up of the additional charges of circulators for living better; and it may be said to represent the more expensive style of living in a country.—Happiness of States, p. 146.*

“A THOROUGH knowledge of price is necessary to understand many of the most important operations in the production of wealth, and to calculate the effects of all: in short, to making any sure progress in the science of statistics. Crude and confused notions about it, have betrayed politicians into the most gross errors,

\* These Essays were written in the spring of 1816, and first published (but in another form) in the *Farmer's Magazine* for May and August of that memorable year. P. 201 and 277.



and led them to conclusions that were in direct opposition to the real results of nature."

There is not, perhaps, a more inveterate prejudice among mankind, than the notion, that *a low price tends to enrich a country*; and, of course, that the lower prices fall, the various classes will become more wealthy. This, however, is directly contrary to facts, and necessarily must ever be so. Yet, though all our classes, except that of annuitants with fixed incomes, are, at present (in 1816), actually suffering from the truth of the opposite doctrine, the great body will not open their eyes to what is brought home to their pockets. They persevere in their prejudices, and use them for the basis of the most illiberal, and indeed, absurd, accusations against our various classes each in their turn. The agricultural body happens to be particularly assailed at present, though it be suffering with peculiar severity from the effects of a too low price.

To attempt to teach the truth on this subject, I am well aware, strange as it may seem, is a purpose nearly Quixotic with respect to the great mass of the lower ranks. Neither reasoning nor facts, I fear, will remove prejudices so deeply rooted among these. There are many, however, of all classes, and these are the most liberal, upon whom neither facts nor reasoning will be lost.

The popular notion animadverted upon, arises, like other similar fancies, from a partial view of the subject. These people look at it only as buyers, and each for himself considers all others only as sellers. He thus leaves out, or overlooks, the essential point of *himself being a seller also*. If we give a lower price, argue all, it must be better for us. But they do not consider,

that in order to be able to be buyers, they must be sellers; and that if they buy lower, they must sell lower. We could buy such an article for so much twenty years ago, or at least at the close of the American war; and now it is no less than twice or thrice the amount. Granted. But is not the fact the same with respect to the articles in which the speakers themselves deal?

And what is the cause of the rise? A higher charge has been made by others on me; and I, in return, have made a higher charge on others. This difference, on the amount of the rise, does more than place the various circulators in the same situation in which they were twenty years ago, or at the close of the American war. For though part of the rise is merely nominal, or takes place to meet the higher charges of others, there is also another part, the object of which was to obtain the means of better living, or of saving more money, if the dealer chooses. Thus all classes with us are richer, not merely nominally, but really, than they were at the close of the American war, or twenty years ago.

Our first conjectures in politics are very apt to be wrong, and to require the correction of a deeper consideration of facts. It seems a very probable thing to our first thoughts, if the loaf should fall from 18d. to 9d. and meat from 10d. a pound to 6d. that all classes would be richer; for, subsistence being cheaper, they will have more money to spend on other articles. But is this the fact? or can it be the actual result of such a fall? Certainly not. Could the income of all classes remain what it was before, and yet subsistence fall, all classes, or the nation would be richer. But this cannot possibly be. With respect to the class of annuitants

with fixed incomes, it is indeed the fact. Their income remains the same, while their expenditure is diminished. Such a fall, therefore, necessarily renders them richer, but it tends to impoverish all the classes whose incomes depend on the amount of employment at the rate of price charged for it.

This fall in the price of subsistence produces necessarily a diminution of the income of the circulators who are employed in raising subsistence. Earning less than they used to do, they must buy less from the other circulators. These, therefore, must suffer a diminution of their means to charge, or their income: of course, likewise all those from whom they buy, and thus in a circle through the whole mass of circulators, except fixed annuitants.

It is an axiom in statistics, that *price, income and employment mutually represent one another, and, therefore, must correspond in amount.* If a few misers be excepted, the income of all circulators is spent in giving employment, either by investing it as capital, or by expending it on the various articles of living. Every average diminution of prices and income must produce a diminution of employment or the means of charging, in one shape or another. A general fall in the rate of prices, therefore, is not, as so many imagine, a mere reduction of the same articles to a lower nominal value, while the amount of articles is the same as before. There is a positive diminution of this amount equal to the amount of the fall, or the proportion which it bears to the former average price.

In the *Happiness of States*, the author, in his analysis of *wages* and of *price*\*, has shown, that the rise

\* B. ii. ch. 8 and 11.

in the average price of things, springs from the various classes charging higher, in order to procure the means of better living, each for itself, as well as to meet the increasing demand made on them by others for a similar purpose. Each class goes on charging as far as is in its power, for more articles that are objects of desire among men; and, in proportion as the average general price rises, all succeed in obtaining their wishes.

Prices being thus made up of the charges of the various classes for subsistence and so forth, and, of course, representing the amount of employment or the means of charging, in one form or another, the rise in price must evidently denote a greater variety of employment, or a greater amount of the same sort. It follows, as evidently, that when the price falls, there must be a diminution of employment, or the means of charging in one shape or another. A general reduction of price in all articles, were that possible with an increase of population, instead of enriching most circulators, or even maintaining them in the same rank of wealth as before, would render all but fixed annuitants poorer.

The same author has laid it down as an axiom in dealing, that *a change in the price of any article, whether to higher or lower, which affects the buyers and sellers of it equally, leaves things, with respect to the various dealers, as before* \*. But it is not meant by this, that such a rise or fall makes buyer and seller neither richer nor poorer; which is contrary to the leading doctrine taught in the same chapter, that *the higher the average general price of things, the richer a district or country*. It means that all such changes leave the buyer and seller in the same comparative state, with

\* P. 144.

respect to each other. In fact, it is grounded on the mathematical truth, that 6 shillings bear the same proportion to 8 that 12 do to 16; but it does not follow from this, that 12 and 16 are not double the amount of 6 and 8.

In thinly-peopled districts, the rate of price is always lower than in those which are more populous. But does this render the various classes in the former richer? or does it suppose them as rich? Quite the reverse. In the Highlands, not a century ago, a dozen of eggs could be got for a penny, and meat for three shillings a pound. But was the population there as rich then as in Edinburgh or London now, where a single egg costs from a penny to three pence, and a pound of meat from eight pence to a shilling? Not to go back to the times of Caractacus and Galgacus, or even to the era of the Reformation, let us fix on the period at the commencement of the American war, when the average rate of British prices was so much lower than at present. Had the different classes then the same variety of comforts in living, or the same means of saving money, as they have had for the last ten years?

In a general reduction of prices, all will participate in the depression. Though they may preserve a corresponding comparative rank with respect to one another as before, yet it is a fall. They may be on the usual corresponding level, but it is a lower level. They have all sunk alike, but still they have really sunk.

The rate of charging in different districts or countries, it is true, will vary. The greater ease or difficulty in procuring some leading articles, and, of course, the less or greater employment afforded by these, — the larger or smaller quantity of them rendered necessary by

climate, and the influence of peculiarities in temper, morals, and manners, produce a difference in the general rate of charging. In some cases, when districts or nations are very dissimilar in their circumstances, these differences may be considerable. The same nominal amount of income in one of these districts and countries may purchase an amount of articles of the same class, very different from what it procures in another. But if the same variety and same quantity of articles be used by corresponding classes in any two states, the rate of charging will not be materially different. Travellers find, that even in countries where the general nominal rate of prices is much lower than in Britain, in proportion as certain districts and towns approach the variety of comforts and luxuries of Britons, and of course, the rate of charging represents a similar variety and amount of employment. with theirs, the rate of price approaches the British.

The mode of living is so essentially connected with the rate of charging, that if the one be given with respect to any town or district, the other may be accurately deduced from it. In proportion as any town or district indulges in comforts and luxuries, the rate of charging is high, and *vice versâ*. When we see a place abounding in good houses and fine furniture, while the inhabitants dress well and eat well, and are very constantly employed, in short, exhibiting generally the marks of comfort and opulence, we shall find that the rate of charging in it is high. But if we enter a town, where the houses are mean and dirty, while the inhabitants fare hardly, dress shabbily, and have more idle time; where the marks of poverty are thus as conspicuous as those of wealth were in the former, we may

rest assured that the price of things there is low. Some peculiar local circumstances produce certain exceptions; but, in general, whether we compare different periods of the same town or district, or different towns and districts, the average price of articles, of bread, of meat, of household furniture, of clothes, of instruction, amusement, &c. according as this is higher or lower, points out the comparative wealth or poverty of the given period or place.

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## ESSAY II.

### *Peace and War Prices.*

It has become fashionable, of late, to consider peace prices as synonymous with low prices, and war prices as synonymous with high prices, particularly with respect to agricultural produce. There seems no good ground for this. The fact has happened to be so in the present instance; but there is nothing in peace that necessarily tends to lower the price of agricultural produce, or of war to raise it. Or, if there be any general tendency of the sort in either, for example, from the increase of taxes in the one, or their diminution in the other, it is liable to be counteracted by occasional circumstances of both.

The average price of wheat per quarter, in Windsor market, for the following years, proves this. In 1755 it was 1*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.* In 1756, the first year of active war,

it rose to 2*l.* 0*s.* 2*d.* Next year it reached 2*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* It then declined; during four years of hot war, till, in 1761, it had fallen to 1*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.* It then rose again; and, in 1766, the last year of that war, it was 1*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.*

In 1764, the first year of peace, it rose to 2*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* In 1765, to 2*l.* 8*s.* From 1766 to 1773, it varied considerably every year, being lowest in 1769, or at 2*l.* 0*s.* 7*d.*; and highest in 1773, the last year of the peace, or at 2*l.* 19*s.* 1*d.*

In 1774, the first year of the American war, it fell to 2*l.* 15*s.* 1*d.* It then kept falling to 1776, when it was 2*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* It rose next year to 2*l.* 8*s.* 11*d.* It fell during the subsequent two years, and reached its lowest depression during this war in 1779, when it was 1*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* It then rose gradually till it reached 2*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.* in 1783, the year in which the war ceased.

It was 5*d.* lower next year. It fell during the two subsequent years of peace, but not so low as in 1779, a year of hot war, for it only sunk to 2*l.* 2*s.* 3*d.* It then gradually rose till 1789, when it was 2*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* In 1790, it was the same. In 1791, it fell to 2*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* In 1792, it rose to 2*l.* 12*s.*

In 1793, the first year of the French revolution war, it was 2*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.* It fell, in 1794, to 2*l.* 14*s.* In 1795, it rose to 4*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* In 1796, it was 4*l.* 0*s.* 2*d.* It fell, in 1797, to 3*l.* 2*s.*; in 1798, to 2*l.* 14*s.* In the famous years 1800 and 1801, it rose to above 2½ times this amount, or to 6*l.* 7*s.* and 6*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.* In 1802, the year of the peace of Amiens, it fell nearly one half, or to 3*l.* 7*s.* 2*d.* It fell still farther, in 1803, the year of renewed war, or to 3*l.* It rose 9*s.* 6*d.* in 1804. In 1805, it was as high as 4*l.* 8*s.* In 1807, it



fell to 8*l.* 18*s.* It was 3*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* in 1809 ; and during the four subsequent years it was very high. It reached its extreme height in 1812, or 6*l.* 8*s.* During the renewed war of 1815 it continued gradually to fall, till it reached its late very low price ; and now it seems to be evidently rising again.

These facts show, that agricultural produce rises and falls in price, without any particular reference to peace or to war ; and, therefore, it is not a state of peace or of war, which, of itself, raises or lowers the prices of the farmer ; but the occasional or particular circumstances of either. And the same thing could be shown with respect to the articles of other circulators. The mere difference in circumstances, arising from our army being chiefly at home or abroad, or from its carrying on war in countries that can supply its soldiers with subsistence, or in those that cannot, and in which they must draw the supplies from our own farmers, will make a very considerable difference in price for the period.

The following is a general view of the two states with respect to price. In peace, the discontinuance of the additional employment created by war, and a diminution of the expenses of government, have a depressing influence ; while, in general, the more rapid progress of population, and a more uninterrupted communication with other nations, operate towards a rise. In war, the increase of taxes and of military employments tends to raise price, while a retardation of the increase of population and interruptions to foreign commerce usually tend to lower it.

ESSAY III.

*A Fall in average Prices produces a Diminution, and a Rise in average Prices, an Increase of Employment, Income, and Wealth.*

FROM the constitution of price, or its being made up of the charges for the articles which circulators use at any given period, *there can be no fixed rate of price by nature.*

There is, however, a fair, or *natural* rate of price of all articles, compared with each other. *This is the average rate of price of the articles, for the period, regulated as an average rate must be, by the style of living of the classes that deal in them, and corrected by competition, whether that rate, on a comparison of countries or periods, be found to be high or low.*

As all circulators charge according to the demands made on them by others, the average rates of prices of particular classes for the period, are taken into the average general price of the period. This general rate is thus adjusted to meet the average particular rates. In proportion as any of these agree with the former, the rate is, on the whole, better for circulators in general. A little tendency to a higher rate, however, far from doing harm, is advantageous to the community. It increases the stimulus on circulation, corresponds with the desire of all circulators, to make a progress in living better, as well as with the tendency to a higher price

produced by the increase of population, and it augments the average amount of employment among the various classes.

Average general prices thus can never be exorbitant, or too high. For when prices, however high, are all equally high, it is evident, they are adjusted to one another. Such prices, for the reasons already given, are necessarily better for all circulators, excepting fixed annuitants.

The exorbitant prices of particular classes are injurious to the other classes: not, indeed, because they are high, but because they are disproportionate to the prices of the latter. The community will not be poorer for these too high charges of some of its people, for they gain what the others lose; but they render these others poorer for the time.

The charges of the lower ranks of circulators form so large a portion of all price, that, in order to give them a decent amount of comforts, the average rate of price must reach a considerable height. The middle ranks, with an inferior rate of charging, may obtain the more common comforts or luxuries; but the highest rate of price, in the most crowded state of population, will procure the lower classes only the cheaper comforts. A low price keeps these hard-working classes grovelling in dirt, and in a state of penury, which is barely able to supply them with the merest necessities.

As the rate of price and the style of living in all their extent, necessarily correspond with and mutually regulate each other, we cannot reduce the former without altering the latter.

All the reduction in price, which can be effected by any practicable diminution of taxes, is very inequsi-

derable. If we want to have the general rate of prices reduced to that of any period, at which it was lower, as, for example, the beginning of the last century, the Reformation, or even to the still much lower rates at the signing of Magna Charta, or of the times of the Norman conquest, all ranks must be contented to fall back to the inferior or poorer mode of living, and, of course, the smaller average quantum of employment, or the means of charging, of that particular period of our ancestors on which we choose to fix. All must consent to sacrifice the comforts and additional articles in eating, clothing, furniture, instruction, amusement, &c. which are represented by the difference between the present average rate, and the rate of that period. This is indispensably necessary; for it is that difference which enables all ranks to obtain the more varied comforts, luxuries, and the larger average portion of wealth of the present age.

But such a returning to poverty and inferior living is an absurdity, with our present rate and state of population; and the possibility of it will never be seriously admitted by any person acquainted with the subject, who will allow himself to think freely on it. Nature will force her way in spite of all prejudices; and she will attend to no theory but her own. Her real laws will continue to operate, whatever dreams may be indulged in concerning them. And all the puny works constructed by men to oppose her current, will ultimately be swept away by one or other of her overwhelming tides.

A fall in the price of any article, from which certain classes derive the whole, or a considerable part of their income, is uniformly, and, upon the foregoing analysis,

it is clear, that it ever must be, attended with more or less embarrassment and distress to those classes and to others through them.

Even in the case when this fall is from a temporary exorbitant to the fair or natural rate, embarrassment and distress will take place. It affects the amount of income, and the mode of living of these classes, as well as injures their arrangements. And most circulators will raise their mode of living to their income, if this be increased, though the addition may be caused merely by occasional circumstances. They are apt to form arrangements in business suited to their new prices. But when the fall is from the fair or natural rate to one that is too low, the injurious consequences are more general; for it reaches all, even the most prudent. In proportion also as any branch of circulation is more extensive or gives employment to a greater number, the fall in price produces the more extensive and severe embarrassment and distress, as it affects more generally all other classes.

This impoverishing effect, with the injurious consequences, takes place when population is stationary, and even decreasing; but, with an increasing population, it is felt with double force. With a decreasing population there is a natural tendency to a lower price, and the particular fall coincides with this general movement. But, with an increasing population, there is an equally natural tendency to a higher price. The supposed fall, therefore, is in opposition to the general movement; and consequently must produce greater embarrassment. Those classes that are more immediately affected by the fall, suffer more severely, as there is a tendency in the rates of many other classes of

circulators, instead of yielding to the influence of theirs, to counteract it, and at least to remain stationary. Their diminished income, of course, is felt with more severity.

With an increasing population, from the nature of things, this must ever be the fact. A permanent fall of general average prices, with such a state of population, seems to be an impossibility. From the supply of certain classes exceeding occasionally the demand for the time, a fall in their articles may take place; but most of the other articles will maintain their rate; and the increase of population by its powerful, indeed uncontrollable influence, will at length check the falling movement in the former, and restore their prices to the proper rates.

It is thus perfectly evident, that every fall from the fair price, and particularly of any leading article, must seriously injure the class that deals in it as well as all connected with the class; while it brings only a little temporary advantage to the annuitants with fixed incomes. The nation is necessarily poorer for every such fall.

Had any statistician, who holds the genuine doctrine of nature, that *a high average rate of price tends to enrich a nation, and to increase its comforts*, been cruel enough, as a theorist, to have wished for a complete confirmation of his doctrine, by the exemplification of the effects of a too low rate of price, he has obtained it in the history of the last nine months. A gallant soldier, in the bosom of the Grampians, has said quaintly, but not unreasonably, *This peace and plenty, which we were all bawling out for, have played the deuce with us. Every body is complaining. They*

*have ruined many, and injured most. And why? Because, under the present circumstances, peace and plenty have for a time produced a reduction of the fair rate of British subsistence.*

The evils of a reduced price are at this moment felt to be distressingly real by the greatest part of British population. The price of that most extensive article of all, subsistence, has fallen, on an average, more than one fourth below its natural price: indeed, at present (1816), nearly to one third. By the natural price of an article, we have seen, is meant that price which enables the dealers in it to meet the prices of other circulations, for the given period, and live according to the usual style of the class for the given period.

The average natural price of subsistence, as of other articles, has risen considerably in Britain within these twenty years. This has sprung from the higher demands made on the cultivator, not only by the government classes, but by all the other classes. These, in like manner, have raised their prices to meet the increased demands of government, as well as to pay for the better style of living introduced by the augmented wealth and employment, created by the increase of population. Besides, this class, like others, has gradually reached a much better style of living; and, therefore, like them too, must charge higher to cover the expense. The result of all this is a considerable rise in the fair rate of his articles.

In this statement we perceive the real cause, and find an easy solution of what puzzles many, that the rate of price of corn and cattle, which in 1790 produced profit and wealth to our cultivator, should prove a source of loss, distress, and frequently, even of bankruptcy, in

1816. The charges of most classes on him are doubled. How then can the same rate of price for his articles, even allowing much for his superior skill in culture, and for the improvements which he has introduced, enable him to meet the demands upon him, and live according to his rank?

The average natural price of wheat for the present period, or that which corresponds with the general average rate of other articles for the last seven or ten years, cannot be taken lower than somewhere between 70s. and 80s. the quarter; but it has fallen below 55s. The income of the cultivator, therefore, is diminished in a degree equal to about 20s. on every quarter of wheat. Most of his other articles have fallen, though not in a similar proportion with grain. According to this ratio, the annual income of the agricultural population of Britain has suffered a defalcation little short of thirty millions. This population has, therefore, thirty millions less to buy with from the other circulators. From the fall in the price of many articles, in consequence of the diminished demand, the remainder of the income, it is true, will purchase more than the usual amount of them: yet, as the amount diminished represented the means of employment and charging somewhere or other, that being gone, the employment and means of charging represented by it, must be gone also.

If we take the average income of Great Britain at 300 millions, the amount of the income created by subsistence at 20 per cent. on the whole, or 90 millions, and the amount of the present reduction of this at 2-7ths, or twenty-five millions, for, instead of possessing 30 per cent. of the usual national income, that branch can only procure the rate of 22, the nation is just twenty-five



millions poorer by the fall. The employment, or means of charging, throughout its various classes, is diminished to that extent as effectually, as if a number of mere misers had got possession of that quantity of the medium of employment, and taken it entirely out of circulation. It is, in truth, *so much circulated in one shape or another actually annihilated.*

Arguing from these principles respecting the price of things, which have unfortunately received too strong a confirmation from the present stagnation and distress arising from reduced prices, I took occasion, a year or two ago, to tell several circulators not of the agricultural class, who wanted to see the loaf and meat at a very reduced rate, that they, and particularly the poor, would have nearly as good reason to regret such a fact, did it actually take place, as the farmer himself. They might get their bread and meat cheaper, but they would have all less to procure it with. If a labourer can earn only eighteen pence, when the loaf is at nine pence, he is worse off than when he can earn half-a-crown, though the loaf may be a shilling. The former will buy only two loaves a-day, the latter two and a half. They have now felt home the truth of these ideas.

If the farmer earns an income of 200*l.* a year instead of the usual three, though there may be a certain fall in the prices of some other articles, he must buy less from the shopkeeper, the tailor, the shoemaker, the carpenter and so forth. These again, having lost part of their usual income derived from him as well as from their other customers, have not the means of purchasing to the usual amount; and thus there is a diminution of buying and selling among all classes of circulators, except fixed annuitants. Hence the present

### ESSAY III. CAUSES POVERTY AND DISTRESS. 477

general stagnation, distress, and despondence, throughout all the towns and districts which depend chiefly on the farmer; and more or less through all others. The additional employment afforded to our manufacturing districts by the new markets opened, or speculations produced by the peace, has certainly done a little, for the time, to check this decrease in the income and employment arising from the agricultural classes. The diminution of both, general and great as it is, would otherwise have been still more universal and considerable.

The result is by no means the same, when the price of any leading species of circulant, for example, subsistence, rises above the natural rate, or the rate which is warranted by the prices of other circulants. Let us suppose, that the agricultural population, instead of the proper 30 per cent. on the national income, is enabled, by charging too high, to obtain 35 per cent. The other classes, on the supposition that they have not, for the time, the means of charging in return for this extra charge, will have their income diminished 5 per cent. in the whole. But still the nation is not poorer. This is a mere transfer case. The agricultural class gains what the other classes lose.

But, in general, unless the rise be so exorbitant for a time, that the other classes have not the means of charging for it, such an increase proves more or less an addition to the wealth of a country. The other classes, fixed annuitants being always excepted, succeed in making some higher charge for their articles; and the increase of employment, arising from the augmentation in the agricultural income, assists them in achieving this. A highish price is, therefore, always better

for circulators in general, or a country, than a lowish one.

A rise in prices operates like an increase of population: a fall in prices, like a decrease. The former tends to augment employment and income, and thus creates a brisk market, and inspirits circulators. The latter tends to diminish both employment and income, and to produce a stagnation; consequently to depress the mind of the circulator and to damp his ardour of enterprise.

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#### ESSAY IV.

#### *Folly of the Attempt to reduce average Prices ;*

*The general increase in the price of things has ever been a source of universal complaint; and yet it is the clearest proof of the growing wealth of a country. The complainers speak as buyers, while they forget that they are sellers also, and are charging in their turn, for their articles, a higher price than formerly. They give more, it is admitted; but then they receive more. Happiness of States, p. 146.*

NOT a few of the commercial and other classes have said, with respect to the present embarrassment,—Why do not the farmers return to the more frugal modes of living of their ancestors, and then the prices of their ancestors would be sufficient?

To this question, the sound statistician, who is

equally the friend of all classes, might reply with another, much more pertinent as well as more liberal: why should they return to the poorer modes of living of their ancestors, if they can keep by the more comfortable modes which they have actually reached? The first question is, in truth, as unwise as it is illiberal. Those who ask it are not aware, that they are pleading for their own poverty, as well as for that of the cultivators. The farmer might well ask these people—And why do you and your classes not return to the more frugal modes of your ancestors, which would relieve me considerably, at least for a time? You keep your prices, while I have been forced by temporary circumstances to reduce mine. And many of you, at least for a time, are reaping some advantage from my unmerited poverty.

That the farmers, by the high average prices of the last twenty years, had risen to a greater degree of wealth, and a richer style of living than their ancestors, is true. But so have the other classes, and to the amount of at least one third through their means. And, in the name of common justice, and of common sense, why should the cultivator alone remain stationary in poverty and discomfort, while all other classes are advancing in comfort and wealth? Why should not he share as well as they, in the happy results with respect to wealth and comfort, necessarily springing, through the benevolent arrangements of nature, from the increase of population? The wonderful exertions which he has made, fully entitle him to this. Much distress, it is admitted, was produced for five or six years by the exorbitant price of his produce; but what has been the

result, on the whole, of this superior style of living to the great mass of circulators?

From the nature of circulation, or the materials of circulation, that which is expenditure to one class, must necessarily be a source of income to others. The richer style of living of our cultivators, both land-owner and tenant, has proved a more copious source of employment and income to the other classes. The better style of living among the latter is, in a considerable degree, to be attributed to the better style of living among the former. The grand result of the benevolent plan of Nature ought never to be forgotten by us "*Directly, or indirectly, all necessarily share more or less in the acquisitions of each*."

But it has been argued, that as our home rate of prices is higher than that of any of our customers, it is of consequence, that this rate should be reduced, in order to retain the foreign market. It is true, if this market depended entirely, or principally, on the mere rate of home prices, such a reduction would be useful. But, with some exceptions, it is not the mere price of labour that determines the price of articles, nor yet the mere price of articles that determines the sale of them. Our higher rate of prices being the source of a greater amount of capital, enables us to adopt modes of fabrication, by which we can make articles not only better, but even cheaper than the inferior capitalist of lower priced countries. This greater amount of capital also enables us both to produce a more certain supply, and, what is of vast consequence, to give longer credit. Thus our higher rate of prices, though at first sight it appears directly hostile to exportation, in reality operates in its

\* Happiness of States, B. ii. ch. 10. p. 122.

favour. And as a proof of this from experience, which is the market, after all the theoretical conjectures we have heard, on the subject, out of which any of our leading articles have been driven by mere rate of price \*?

Besides, our rate of prices operates in our favour another way. Our articles of manufacture forming a part of the expenditure of our foreign customers, and the largest among our best, have a tendency to raise the rate of charging in the countries to which we export. And yet further: the increase of population, and consequently of wealth, among our customers, has as constant a tendency to raise the average rate of prices among them as among ourselves. This rise in their price will certainly tend to augment their capital; but, in proportion as this is increased, their rate of prices will approach nearer to ours. The truth is, the manufacturers of Britain have much more to fear from increasing capital and growing excellence of fabric among the foreign, than from mere price. Though it may seem a paradox at the first view, it will be found to be a fact, that the nearer the price-rate of foreigners comes to our own, the more effectually will they rival us in the general market.

But were even our high rate of price to diminish somewhat the amount of employment derived from abroad, the loss would be much more than counter-balanced by this high rate of price at home. And, *vice versâ*, if our exports should increase by a fall in our price of subsistence, &c. the home demand would decrease to a much larger amount.

In sum, a fall in the average rate of things has a necessary tendency to diminish the amount of employ-

\* See All Classes productive, B. ii. ch. 9, p. 205.

ment, and to render all ranks of a nation poorer, while a rise in the same rate has as necessary a tendency to increase the quantum of employment, and to enrich. *A reduction of prices is equivalent to a diminution of the quantum of employment and of income in a district or a nation.*

This is the fact, whatever be the class in which the diminution takes place. The great reduction that has been effected in the incomes of the war classes by the return of peace has contributed considerably, with the reduction of the farmer's prices, to produce the present stagnation and distress. Not only have many thousands been reduced in their pay, but many thousands entirely deprived of employment for the time, and consequently, also, of the means of giving employment to others.

Nothing in statistics can either be clearer in theory, or more fully established in practice, than this: and yet the cry both of the higher and lower multitude with us at present is, Reduce prices! reduce prices!—That is, distress all, make all poor. For what is this outcry for a lower rate of prices, but bawling for greater poverty and less employment? It is wishing us to return to the poorer times of our ancestors, to charge less for food, clothing, housing, taxes, education; and to diminish the average quantum of employment, or the means of income, through all classes. I should like to be shown by these sapient price reducers, how a nation when it divides at the rate of twenty pounds annually per head, has not more exchangeable wealth than when it divided at the rate of fifteen or ten.

Could these people obtain their wishes permanently, they would deprive the lower classes of their present little comforts, and drive them from their tidy cottages

into the wretched hovels of lower-priced times, to pass a weary life amid poverty, inconvenience and dirt. The poor would, and ever must, suffer worst by a fall in prices, as they cannot afford to part with one comfort, or lose any of their employment. The middle ranks would also be obliged to give up more or less of their comforts, as they would be deprived of part of the employment which procures these: but all ranks, from the lowest to the highest, would suffer. In short, these price reducers would enrich all, by making every body poorer. They would *save the nation*, as they phrase it, by spreading poverty and bankruptcy through all its ranks. Yes, they would render it rich and happy, by robbing every class of more or less of its usual employment, and distressing man, woman, and child.

This price-reducing spirit is indeed by no means a new inspiration. It has in all ages infested the multitude in one form or another. It formerly produced those sumptuary laws, which are now reckoned so ridiculous, even by many who are actuated by their spirit, though, it would seem, there has been of late a strange ebullition of the sort in Sweden. These sumptuary wiseacres, like our price-reducers, thought the way to enrich a country was, in plain British, to *diminish the amount of employment and narrow the source of wealth*. Instead of being guided by nature, and yielding to the results of her arrangements, which are so admirably formed gradually to extend the means of happiness, if men will but let her have her own way, our politicians in all ages have shown a disposition to check her, and model her arrangements according to some old or new fancies of their own. And what is usually the decision of a wiser posterity respecting these meddlers and nature-menders?



That they were ignorant bunglers, or fantastical wrong-heads.

Circulators, when in the price-reducing humour, speak as consumers or buyers. Price, it is commonly thought, falls at last entirely on the consumer. This, however, is a mere misconception. The consumer, it is true, pays nominally the whole of the price of the article. But this price falls no more really on him, than on any of the sellers through whose hands it passes, and who add to the amount of the charge for it. They, in their prices, counterchange each for a part; he, in his, countercharges for the whole.

Some years ago the manufacturing classes laboured under the effects of a reduction of prices, which in spite of what our price-reducing theorist tells us, produced similar distress among them, as the same thing is causing among our cultivators and others at present; for the effect is inevitable. Our economists, both in town and country, seemed then honestly to pity the former, and wished them a speedy rise. Scarcely a word was said about the advantages of reducing prices, that now grand recipe for saving the nation. There happened, at that time, to be no rage for economy in blaze among us, as at present: I mean, on the tongue, and in print. For, while every body is raving for economy both with tongue and type, I find, what some really economical people would call *extravagance*, in as full possession of most domestic administrations as ever. But now, when the same evil has fallen on our agricultural classes, instead of pity and kind words, they meet with taunts about their style of living; or else with cold and grave queries from our economy and retrenchment men, whether it would not be better for the nation, that their

prices should remain as they are, and that the prices of all other classes should be reduced like theirs.

That the cry of lower prices should be set up for the time by cockney economists, is not to be wondered at; but that grave politicians, who profess to have studied the science of statistics, should join in it, is more unaccountable. It is founded on imaginations, that are in direct opposition to the first principles of the science; demonstrated by the whole mass of real facts, and equally by general results and by exceptions from them. Many of our statisticians compare the prices of British agricultural produce, when our population was two and even three millions less than it is at present, with what those prices are now; and seem disposed to think, that what was a fair natural rate then, should be a fair natural rate still. Not a few of them ask, and some wonder, why the rate which produced comfort, when the population amounted to ten or eleven millions, should produce distress when it is thirteen or fourteen.

This shows strange inattention to what may almost be called the self-evident effects of the increase of population. A man has only to open his eyes and look round him, trusting to the guidance of common sense, to see that this increase uniformly augments employment, and of course wealth, among all ranks. Greater wealth produces a better or more expensive style of living; and, if all ranks live better, all ranks must charge higher for what they sell.

A general progress in a more comfortable style of living; particularly among the lower, and, of course, the more populous classes, which is the result of the increase of population and of wealth, is thus reciprocally cause and effect to an increase of price. When people live

better they must charge higher and increase the quantum of employment; and by augmenting employment, as well as charging higher, they are enabled to live better, and charge still higher, and so on. Thus, though sixty shillings a quarter for wheat proved a fair natural rate, when our population was ten or eleven millions, seventy-five or eighty shillings are no more than a fair natural rate, when it has reached thirteen or fourteen. The additional imposts for supplying the demands of government, which have also been considerable, have operated very powerfully, along with this natural influence of the increase of population and wealth, to increase the rate of price.

All means of alleviating the present distress (in 1816) unless accompanied with a rise of prices, will prove futile and abortive. The removing of the income-tax will, however, for a time, necessarily tend much to relieve the distressed circulators; not, indeed, by lowering prices, as so many imagine, but by raising them. It will bring nearly forty thousand pounds sterling a day into the peace channels, and render perhaps from eight to ten millions of additional income available among the country bankers and country capitalists: the rest will operate in the same way in the metropolis. Our females will take care not to let this part of income form an inactive mass of capital. They will rather anticipate, than postpone. This will oppose for some time, a very powerful counteracting influence to that produced by the reduction of pay and prices among so many war circulators and others. It will give a fresh spring to our manufactures, by increasing the demand and raising the price; and the agricultural classes will feel the influence in the circle.

This influence indeed will only be temporary. Even at first the case is but a transfer one with respect to the nation. The late payers of the income-tax gain what losses to whom it gave employment loss. Price will gradually fall from the competition to sell low, till ultimately the demand is lessened to the amount which the income-tax created.

The effects of the reduction of prices have completely belied the speculations of our price-reducing theorists. Instead of the injury, done by the fall in the prices of some leading articles, being alleviated by the fall in the prices of others, as they imagine, it has been increased. It made matters worse, by still further diminishing the average quantum of employment among the various classes. Thus, instead of there being any appearance of these classes growing gradually more comfortable, or obtaining relief from this equalizing of prices on a lower rate, the evil has become worse and worse every day. Even some of our most furious reduction-of-price theorists begin at length to cast a wistful eye to a rise of prices, as if it was more likely to effect a cure. And it will, and it alone.

That rise, I trust, has again commenced a permanent progress. And as soon as our leading articles reach their fair natural rates, these theorists will find the lie given by facts to their theory by this rise, if not more completely, at least more pleasantly, than by the late and present depression. In proportion as wheat approaches, say 80s. all classes, as well as the agricultural, will find employment increased, their prices better, their comforts more numerous, and their spirits improved as well as their prospects.

The reduction-of-price fever seems rather to have

passed the crisis; and perhaps, by harvest\*, the great mass of Britons will have returned to a sober state of mind: I mean, on this topic. Some other epidemic, it is not unlikely, may have laid hold of the nation by that time. The coal statistician knows not whether to treat with serious indignation, or to laugh at the reveries that have been sported during the delirium of this unusually high fever. I think, he had better smile.

There are already some slight symptoms of convalescence. A month or six weeks hence, even our town economist may begin to think it a truth capable of belief, that every shilling we take from a man's income, renders him a worse customer to those with whom he deals, by a shilling: it matters not, whether he buys from the shoemaker, the hatter, the bookseller, or goes to the play or the coffee-house. I know not whether this economist will have sagacity enough to trace the thing in its ramifications, till he reaches a total annihilation.

\* Ere the harvest of 1816 came, the fever was nearly gone, except among fixed annuitants. The other classes had suffered so much from low prices, that they began soberly to believe, that a highish price was rather a goodish thing. We have had several fevers and influenzas since. To say nothing of the old periodical and dangerously inflammatory fever of the brain, or the universal suffrage and annual parliament frenzy, which was very high, but that is nothing out of the common way, the chief epidemic of 1817 has been the retrenchment influenza. It is of the typhus kind, principally brought on, it is said, by distress and low living, but I have my doubts, and has been attended with much restlessness, and more delirium. It still continues to rage, but the violence is rather, if any thing, abated. How long it will be, ere we return to a state of sober convalescence, with respect to this epidemic, I venture not to prophesy. A brisk trade may, perhaps, cure it. But it seems of a very nervous and peculiarly lingering cast.

lation of employment, or the means of charging, in one form or another, to the amount. At any rate, I question, if ever our cockney-agriculturist will so far forget the cheap poultry, eggs and butter of *small farms*, as to admit, that by reducing the rents of the landholders, who are by far the most extensive and most profitable set of customers to all the other classes, we should injure these classes as much as the landholders themselves; and particularly, that most of them would either not be able to come to John's chief town at all, or, if they should come to John's chief town at all, they must stay a shorter while, and buy less from every class of John's people. If he should get so far out of his usual circle, as to think thus freely, he might perhaps query, whether reducing rents, as it would necessarily reduce John's custom and income also, be quite so useful and advantageous a thing as it is held in the city.

To conclude more seriously: the liberal trade maxim, so frequently in the mouths of dealers, *Live and let live*, is one of the soundest principles in statistics. The rate of charging of each class *should be ample, but, in no case, exorbitant*. A permanent reduction in the prices would reduce all ranks lower in the scale of wealth, in proportion to the extent of the reduction, and prove a source of universal embarrassment and discontent. But such a change, with an increase of population, is impossible. Local or temporary falls may and do take place; and they must ever be attended, as in the present case, with a diminution of employment and income, and consequently with poverty and distress. *A tendency in the rates of prices to rise, according to an average fair proportion, is, therefore, always most advantageous to individuals, as well as to every class, except that of annuitants with fixed incomes, and to the nation.*

## No. VII.

*The Money Question.*

WE have now completed the discussion of the questions between the statisticians and economists, or, if the reader chooses, the Productives and Unproductives, and between the Populationists and Subsistenceists, affecting, as they do, the foundations of the science of statistics. And it has been endeavoured to establish, by an analysis of facts, or results, the real principles of circulation, and of productiveness both with respect to wealth, and subsistence, as they are found actually operating in nature.

The questions between the moneyists and bullionists are intimately connected with the former; and it might be thought a part of the plan to discuss these in the same manner. But the author of the *Happiness of States*, in his attempt to settle the real principles of the exchanging species of circulant, or money, found it requisite to go so minutely into those questions, as to render it unnecessary.

The bullionists have indeed of late begun to dream again, but they have brought forth nothing new. It is still the same dull round of stale fancy. The sum of bullionism, which is a fanciful mixture of old prejudices with modern economical-dreaming, shone some years ago with dazzling brightness; but it seems now far in the cloudy west. The abettors of that system in all their fine erudite excursions find their auditors and readers have

left them in the lurch. Out of their own circle, they perceive but too plainly, that they are more apt to raise a smile or produce a yawn, than to create interest. They have been abandoned even by the multitude. The lowest ranks now take paper in preference to metal money. Indeed it is preferred by all, except the smelters, or those who buy it as money, in order to sell it as metal.

Striking as has been the confirmation of the principles, developed in the Happiness of States, respecting the source of real productiveness as to wealth, and the regulation of subsistence, afforded by facts, in the most varying and trying circumstances, since the publication of that work, the principles of money established in it, have, in equally varying and trying circumstances, met with a confirmation not less complete. The doctrines there taught concerning metal and paper money, about the time the work was written, were opposed almost by every person whether conversant or not conversant with the subject, particularly in the south. They for the most part only raised a smile, and were reckoned unworthy of serious attention. Such, however, have been the irresistible proofs in favour of them from facts (and these frequently most distressing) which come before every man, and affect intimately every man, that the ideas if not theoretically, are at least practically acquiesced in now by all classes. From the influence of old prejudices and modern dreaming many may still demur in words; but they feel and are willing to enjoy the practical advantages derived from them. Some of our bullionists themselves are beginning at length to awake. Perhaps when they open their eyes completely, they may be induced to say, And behold it has been but a dream.



The difficulty in this, as in some other cases of dreaming or cloud-riding in statistics, is to get people to open their eyes to plain facts, or to keep on the solid ground. They shut their eyes and let their imaginations run wild in the regions of economism, and soar far above facts amid the clouds of fancy. In vain does every man acquainted with the subject see, that the amount of paper money, issued as money, whether increasing or decreasing, depends entirely on the demand for it, created by the circumstances of the market for the day, the week, the month, the year: that the course of exchange fluctuates, and the price of gold and silver rises or falls, without reference to the quantum of notes in circulation: that, for one example out of a perpetual train of similar facts, the market price of gold from commercial and political circumstances some years ago rose forty per cent. above the mint or artificial price, and lately it fell to this price and at present is only four or or five per cent. above it, though the issue of bank-notes has increased many millions: that the withdrawing of the capital arising from paper money by the country bankers, assisted most materially in producing the distress of 1816 and putting a stop to improvements of every kind; and that the extension of that sort of capital again is operating strongly to increase employment and income. Instead of attending to these facts, they make mental excursions the Lord knows where. If they are asked to show, how it is possible, that the amount of that money which is always returnable, and, therefore, regulated by the demand, *and by the will of the users, who must either pay or lose a percentage on the amount which they needlessly keep*, can be excessive, they do not answer this plain question, on which

the whole depends, by a statement of facts on the other side. This does not seem to suit their purpose at all. They fly up among the clouds of bullionism, and talk in some kind of fancy jargon, which I should think would puzzle our more subtle economists, skilled in the dialects of imagination as they are, and can scarcely be intelligible even to themselves.

All that I consider necessary here is to refer to the third book of the *Happiness of States*, for the analysis of the principal facts and investigation of the leading principles of that admirable species of money, a voluntary paper currency, which completely answers all the purposes of home-money, and at the same time proves a most productive species of circulant, as well as a most active capital. The first chapter treats of the nature of money. The second points out the qualities of paper money, and shows that it creates active capital to the various classes of circulators to the amount of its issue, and produces profit to the issuer to that amount, while metal money withdraws its amount completely from the total of capital, and produces no profit, but occasionally loss. In the fourth chapter it is shown further, that such a money is entirely regulated by the demand, and that consequently the issue cannot be excessive: in the fifth, that a voluntary money of this description is not depreciable; and in the seventh, that it cannot affect the state of the exchanges with foreign nations.

Some of our bullionists talk still indeed of the great advantages to be derived from our returning to what they call a *wholesome state of currency*, that is, to a metal currency, or a currency at least chiefly composed of metal. To make use of a medium, which deprives a state of an amount of active capital, equal to the

quantity of money in circulation, and the withdrawing of a part of which in 1816 assisted materially in paralysing the efforts of the country: which robs individuals and the nation of the income derived from the issue of paper money (in Great Britain above three millions a year): which would make the issuers buy gold at the natural or market price, and sell it at a fixed artificial price, and which consequently, when metal money only is sought after, that is, when its materials will bring more than its form as coin, would enable dishonest men to fleece the issuers by selling it as metal: such a measure may produce a state of the currency, which these bullionists may call wholesome; but all practical men, all sound statisticians will consider it as a most unwholesome state of things.

I may take occasion here to observe respecting the balances of the public money in the hands of the Bank, about which so much has been said, that the matter admits of a fair and easy mode of adjustment. I am fully aware of the truth of what I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that, by the laws of statistics, every thousand pounds made by the Bank of England, as well as by any other company, or by any individual among us, is so much added to the income of the country; and either as capital, or as expenditure, creates employment, in the circle, to that amount. Neither do I grudge it any of its fair profits. I wish these to increase. But at present, when our national income, unless we include the sinking fund, is not equal to our expenditure, and when from the disposition and circumstances of the country, it is inconvenient to impose fresh taxes, to pay a per centage for the use of our own money, or to be deprived of the interest on it, is not so well.

What I have to propose is this: the nation should allow the Bank to have always a balance in its favour, suppose, of three millions, which would be worth from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. Let the floating balances be ascertained every month. For all that is above these three millions, the Bank shall pay to government at the rate of four per cent. or any other per centage agreed upon; but if the public offices have overdrawn on these three millions, government will pay interest at the same rate for the amount. And that amount should always be limited to the exhausting of the actual balance, or three millions. When this event took place, the Bank might refuse to answer any more drafts, till it obtained a fresh supply of public money. This adjustment should content the Bank, and I think it would satisfy the country.

But to return to the money question: if government will not adopt the mode of issuing metal money, as its nature requires, at the market price of the day for pieces of a certain weight, but will still persist in making the Bank issue, that is, sell gold at a fixed price, which it cannot be bought at, the usual inconveniencies will certainly occasionally occur. Such expensive absurdities, however, will at length cure themselves.

But in vain will our bullionists, or metal moneyists, dream against paper money, and tell their dreams. That admirable species of home money, though unknown to our ancestors, is now well known throughout Britain. Its value is acknowledged, and its excellence felt. And to little purpose will any theorists declaim against it. Convenience and profit are too powerful for theory. In practical matters, the dreamings of speculatists cannot stand long against waking realities, or their

fancyings against facts. They may rhapsodise; but they will not retard the progress of a voluntary paper money of the British description. It will gradually be adopted by our neighbours and connexions, till, except for small change, it becomes what it is completely fitted to be, the home money of all commercial and populous nations.

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